THE LEGEND OF SHAMBHALA IN EASTERN AND WESTERN INTERPRETATIONS

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November, 1997

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts.

0-612-43854-6

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to give my deepest thanks to professor Richard Hayes, my thesis supervisor without whose encouragement and guidance this thesis would not be possible. I am endebted to all the librarians in Canada, USA and Russia who assisted me with the collection of materials and data. Many thanks are also due to people who expanded my knowledge on the Shambhala legend. Among them are Michail Chiriatiev, president of the Roerich and Ramakrishna society of St.Petersburg, Daniel Entin, director of the New York Roerich Museum, Edwin Bernbaum, the author of The Way to Shambhala, and Nyingma-pa lama Mipham Choogyal. I would like to give my special thanks to the Sakya-pa lama Chopgyet Trichen Rinpoche for the blessing of this work.

ABSTRACT

The legend of Shambhala incorporated in the ***Tibetan Canon***, has been one of the favourite motives of Tibetan Buddhism throughout the centuries. High lamas and laity alike venerated the legend connecting their innermost aspirations with it. For some it represents a mystical millennial country revealing itself only to the chosen ones, while others perceive it as a symbol of the hidden treasures of the mind. This way or the other, the legend of Shambhala remains a living belief for many. The present hardships of Tibet made the legend with its leitmotif of future victory of Buddhism, especially viable.

When the legend reached the West in the beginning of this century, it inspired many westerners including political leaders, and acquired diverse and innovative interpretations.

Conveying the ever cherished human dream of a better world beyond ours, the legend of Shambhala proved to be a ubiquitous symbol surpassing its original Buddhist framework.

RÉSUMÉ

La légende de Shambhala, incorporée au ***Canon Tibétain*** *est un des motifs les plus répandus du bouddhisme Tibetain depuis des siècles. Les haut lamas, aussi bien que les laïques, vénèrent cette légende et y associent leurs aspirations intimes. Pour certains, elle représente un pays mystique et millénariste qui ne se révèle qu'aux élus, tandis que d'autres y voient un symbole des trésors cachés de l'esprit.* Quoi qu'il en soit, la légende de Shambhala reste une croyance vivante pour le peuple. Les souffrances présentes du Tibet rendent cette légende, avec son leit-motif de la victoire future du bouddhisme, particulièrement actuel.

Lorsque la légende parvint en Occident, au début du vingtième siècle, elle inspira un grand nombre d'occidentaux, y compris des leaders politiques, et s'y enrichit d'interprétations variées et innovatrices.

En transmettant le rêve humain, chéri depuis toujours, d'un meilleur monde situé par delà le notre, la légende de Shambhala s'est avérée un symbole qui a su dépasser son cadre bouddhiste originaire.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

What is the uniqueness of the Shambhala legend that retained its popularity and significance throughout centuries? Why did it turn out to be so alive and inspiring for masses both in the East and the West? What was the original motivation of its promulgators: thirst for power or compassion of bodhisattvas? What does the legend tell us about Buddhism, religion in general, the world, human spirit and its potential? Answering these questions means designing the well-deserved niche that the legend should occupy in history and phenomenology of religion.

The present thesis will attempt to look at these issues, though they might require more thorough examination than that allowed in the framework of an M.A. thesis. In its course we will trace the history of the Shambhala myth from its original Indian-Tibetan context into the modern world and discuss the often incredible transformations the legend underwent.

Chapter two of the thesis is devoted to the history of Kalacakra, the main teaching of Shambhala that is believed to have been kept there before its coming to India in the tenth century A.D. Several versions of the Kālacakra history available to us now outline distinct perspectives for future study and research that may contribute to Buddhist studies and expand our knowledge of the history of Buddhism in India and Tibet.

The myth of Shambhala is not exceptional in the sense that folklore of the countries neighbouring Tibet is rich in stories of mythical or historical places that served as the birthplaces and strongholds of different religious beliefs. The comparative study and analysis of the myths similar to the Shambhala legend can be reciprocally beneficial; hence chapter one deals with the original Shambhala myth as well as

with its Central and Eastern Asian counterparts.

Chapter three will review various interpretations of the Shambhala myth in the West. We will see how the myth, having completely lost its Tibetan identity, became a weapon in the hands of different political parties and movements. In chapter four of the thesis we will examine some modern Tibetan and Western trends of the Shambhala myth interpretation. In conclusion, we will attempt to look into the inner symbolism of the legend and to discern its universal message.

Review of Literature.

Fortunately, we have at our disposal of the precious materials of ***Kanjur*** (*Bkaib agur*) and ***Tanjur*** (*Bstan agur*) collection, known as the ***Tibetan Canon***, that is the primary valid source of information, along with the ***Purāṇas***' references to Shambhala and its future role in our planet's salvation. ***Rāmāyaṇa*** and ***Mahābhārata*** also contain passages related to Shambhala.

The ***Tibetan Canon*** is primarily valid from the Buddhist point of view as it contains "*Buddha Vacana*", the words of the Buddha, representing an indisputable authority for Mahāyāna and Tantric buddhists. According to E.Bernbaum, "the Kālacakra texts contain sermons delivered by the Buddha in which he describes Shambhala and the role it will play in history" (Bernbaum, 28). Being a *"sarvajñā"* (all-knowing), the Enlightened One could not possibly mislead his devotees.

As the legendary land of Shambhala became known through the Kalacakra system, a part of the ***Tibetan Canon***, the latest scholarly researches on Kālacakra by Hoffmann, Mullin, Hopkins, Newman, Orofino and others, are very valuable. However, the ***Kālacakra Tantra*** itself, though highly esoteric, coded, and basically not translated into any European

language, is paid much more attention to in the modern academic world than the actual place of origination and preservation of this highest tantra. This can be partially explained by the lack of the scholarly approved sources, as well as by the extreme vagueness of almost all existent materials on Shambhala. The most ample and detailed of the recent publications on the subject is The Way to Shambhala by E.Bernbaum. Besides that, we have to rely on rather scattered pieces of information in various Buddhist and Tibetological periodicals that at best devote a few lines, or paragraphs, to Shambhala, usually in connection with the Kālacakra studies, or Kālacakra Initiation which has recently become very popular in the West.

Another body of literature on Shambhala, though rather abundant and of some academic value, has a predominantly occult, in other words, obscure character, and is not essentially effective in shedding light on one of the world's most concealed mysteries. The peculiarity of the topic is that the more it loses contact with the original source, the more it loses touch with reality, acquiring more eccentric, sometimes distorting, and sometimes, as we shall see later, even menacing interpretations.

A comparatively recent interest of western scholars[1] in the ancient systems of "sacred geography" or "geomancy" seems to be closely connected to the legend of Shambhala. An attempt is made to seek for equally holy, powerful and auspicious areas that have tangible physical locations on this planet, and are not so hopelessly inaccessible as the kingdom of Shambhala. The results of the search that is mostly carried out in Tibet and Nepal are widely discussed in periodicals.

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[1]. Bishop, Cantwell, Buffetrille, Ehrhard, Stutchbury, Huber, Loseries, Reinhard have been writing extensively on the subject.

"Messieurs, lorsqu'en vain notre sphere
Du bonheur cherche le chemin,
Honneur au fou qui ferait faire
Une reve heureux au genre humain!"[2]

SHAMBHALA MYTH. ORIGIN AND ESSENCE.

The legend of Shambhala enchants one first of all with its exceptional sublime beauty. An ageless human dream of an attainable empyrean is vividly embodied in the legend. As all utopian/millennial myths, the legend of Shambhala aspires to elevate souls above mediocrity and prosiness and direct minds towards eternity. Narration about the existence on this planet of beings more refined than ourselves brings a tremendous hope for a feasible transformation of oneself and subsequently this world. The legend shines like an immaculate pearl in the sea of troubles. It is uneasy to reach, yet not for a skilled swimmer. The Shambhala legend being a part of Buddhist Canon, shares this hope-giving salvific quality with all world religions.

The Shambhala legend preserves its original authenticity and for centuries has remained the subject of utter veneration and worship among Tibetans and Mongols. The Kālacakra Initiation, which is one of the most frequent, well-known and well-attended Buddhist religious ceremonies of nowadays, involves the Asian as well as Western adherents of the Buddhist faith. One of the most significant parts of the initiation is the belief in the future rebirth in the blissful country of Shambhala. The initiates are supposed to take part in the great final battle of Shambhala against the barbarians, i.e. all the foes of Buddhism, to die as heroes and, to be eventually reborn

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[2]. Beranger, P.-J. Bibliotheque Francaise, XIX siecle. Paris: Librairie Plon, 1913, p.211.

in Shambhala. This widespread belief adds enormously to the contemporary relevance of the legend.

We will now take a closer look at the legend of Shambhala, its roots and contents, and its place in Buddhist history and in the Buddhist world view.

The task of finding the most appropriate definition of Shambhala is not easy considering the possibility of many different meanings of the word[3] depending on the point of perception. What is Shambhala: A legendary Himalayan abode of wisdom and longevity, an enlightened state of mind, or a universal symbol of the Golden Age? What directions should be followed to find it? Is it in Tibet or China, Gobi or Takla Makan desert, or, as some lamas assert, in the kingdom of one's

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[3]. The Tibetan for the Sanskrit "Shambhala" (*Śambhāla*) is "*bde 'byung*", "the source of happiness" (see Sarat Chandra Das. A Tibetan-English Dictionary, with Sanskrit Synonyms, rev. ed. [reprint ed., Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1976], pp.670 and 1,231. "This translation is not immediately evident from the Sanskrit. '*Sham*' (Sk. '*Śam*' does mean 'happiness'and 'tranquility', but '*bhāla*' is a term of uncertain meaning, possibly derived from the obscure verbal root '*bhal*', which may mean 'to give' (see Sir Monier-Williams, A Sanskrit-English Dictionary, new ed. [1899; reprint ed., London: Oxford University Press, 1970], pp. 748 and 1,054) (Bernbaum, 270).

Gar-je K'am-trul Rinpoche gives some other versions of the "Shambhala" etymology. According to one of them, "there was a member of the Sakya clan by the name of Shambhaka who controlled this region and thus it received his name". Also, "the Source of Happiness " is another name of Śiva and thus Shambhala is the "Land held by Śiva"" (Gar-je K'am-trul Rinpoche, 7). Considering the fact that Śiva is included in the Buddhist pantheon, the latter supposition may be right.

A.Senkevitch gives a similar interpretation. His opinion is that the word "Shambhala" derives from one of Śiva's names, i.e. "*Sambhu*" and "*alaya*" meaning "abode". He mentions yet another version which traces back the etymology of "Shambhala" to the Sanskrit word "*sambari*" - meaning "magic" or "sorcery"(Senkevitch, 444).

heart? Even the geographical locations of the "earth" Shambhala vary. Gar-je K'am-trul Rinpoche says that Shambhala's "appearance varies according to one's karma" (K'am-trul Rinpoche, 30). The legend itself is engulfed in such an impenetrable mystery that it leaves a vast space for all sorts of fantasies, guesses and hypotheses, sometimes taking as we shall see later, the most implausible, and not to mention unscientific, forms.

As was mentioned above, the earliest references to Shambhala are found in **Tanjur** and **Kanjur** [4]. The oldest written information about Shambhala is dated in the eleventh century A.D. At that time many original Sanskrit works were translated into Tibetan. Before their coming to India and to Tibet in the eleventh century A.D. they were supposed to have been preserved in the land of Shambhala for about a thousand years. Besides that fundamental body of literature, many additional works, both prose and poetry were composed; unfortunately, most of them are lost. Since oral tradition and transmission are very vital in Tibetan Buddhism, they probably played the most

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[4]. As was mentioned earlier, the works on Kālacakra tantra and its commentaries are still awaiting their English translation. Therefore, all the information regarding the description of the Shambhala kingdom basically derives from two sources: E.Bernbaum's The Way to Shambhala and A Geography and History of Shambhala by Gar-je K'am-trul Rinpoche, that are based on the partial translations of the primary sources such as "*Klong rdol bla ma ngag dbang blobzang, Dus kyi'khor lo'i lo rgyus dang sham bha la'i zhing bkod bcas* in Ven. Dalama, ed., Tibetan Buddhist Studies of *klon-rdol bla-ma Nag-dban-blo-bzan* (Mussoorie: Van. Dalama, 1963) 1:128-32; the Third Panchen Lama, *Blo bzang dpal ldan ye shes, Grub pa'i gnas chen po sham bha la'i rnam bshad' phags yul gyi rtogs brjod dang bcas pa* (block print, 50 folios), fols. 41b-44a (commonly referred to as *Sham bha la'i lam yig*), Tibetan text and German translation in Albert Grunwedel, ed. and trans. Der Weg nach Sambhala, Abhandlungen der Koniglich Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 29, No

crucial role in preservation of the legend till our days.

Regarding the location[5] of the glorious kingdom, the earliest texts point to the north of Bodhgaya. The guidebooks (*lam yig*) describing the routes to Shambhala usually give very different directions and there is no certain consensus on Shambhala's exact location. However, the description of the kingdom is given in great detail. It is said that the kingdom is completely surrounded by snow mountains making it almost unreachable. Some texts say that to enter Shambhala one has to fly over the mountain ranges. The flight should be carried out with the help of spiritual powers, not using any machines. Inside that outer ring there is another ring of even higher mountains divided into eight parts by rivers and smaller mountains. These parts, or regions, resemble eight lotus petals, each of which contains twelve principalities ruled by a local prince. Thus, there are ninety-six princes who are loyal to the King of Shambhala. As Gar-je K'am-trul Rinpoche informs us, "there are 120 million cities in each of the petals of the lotus, making 960 million cities altogether. For each 10 million cities there are 800,000 counties which constitute one kingdom" (K'am-trul Rinpoche, 7). The cities are full of golden-roofed pagodas and beautiful parks.

At the very centre of the lotus flower, in the inner ring lies *Kalāpa*, the capital of Shambhala. Two lakes in a shape of a half moon and a crescent and filled with jewels are to the east and west of the city. To the south of the capital there is a park of sandalwood trees called *Malaya*, where a huge

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3 (Munich, 1915), pp. 70-74" (Bernbaum, 270).

[5]. Here we discuss only the original geographical location of Shambhala as indicated in the primary sources. When the myth of Shambhala reached USA and Europe, a tendency emerged to locate it elsewhere, including USA and Russia.

Kālacakra maṇḍala was built by the first King of Shambhala, *Sucandra*. To the north, the shrines and sacred images are located, as well as "the palace complex where the religious kings, the Holders of the castes, reside" (K'am-trul Rinpoche, 7).

The King's palace, "larger than that of Indra" (K'am-trul Rinpoche, 7) is glittering in the middle of the capital competing in brightness with the sun and the moon. Its roof is made of pure gold and the ornaments of precious stones such as diamonds, pearls, emeralds and sapphires. Special crystals are imbedded in the floors and ceilings to regulate the temperature of the interior. In the centre of the palace is the golden throne of the King supported by eight carved lions and decorated with wonderful gems. The King is the holder of the magic wish-fulfilling jewel (*Cintāmani*) given to him by the naga-deities. In Gar-je K'am-trul Rinpoche's description of the Shambhala King's treasures, instead of Cintāmani, we find an "inexhaustible treasure vase, the wish-fulfilling cow, the unsown harvest and the wish-granting tree" (K'am-trul Rinpoche, 8). The King is surrounded by a splendid retinue always at the ready to perform his command. He has horses, elephants and all kinds of vehicles including an aircraft "made of stone". The stock of gold and gems is tremendous. "All the new products for daily samsaric use have been manufactured spontaneously without any effort...it is explained that all of this has come about by the compassionate prayers of the Buddhas and by the force of the karma of sentient beings in general..." (K'am-trul Rinpoche, 8).

All the inhabitants of Shambhala live in absolute peace and harmony, free of sickness or hunger. They are all of a healthy and beautiful appearance and wear turbans and white clothes. Their language is Sanskrit. All of them are extremely

wealthy but have no need to use their wealth. There are no such things as physical punishment or imprisonment as there is nobody to be punished. "As all the kings are religious ones, there is not even a sign of non-virtue or evil in these lands. Even the words 'war' and 'enmity' are unknown. The happiness and joy can compete with that of the gods" (Gar-je K'am trul Rinpoche, 7).

Shambhala's inhabitants are not immortal, but their life span is fairly long, about one hundred years. They devote their life fully to the attainment of enlightenment by studying and practicing the Kālacakra Tantra, and they bring up their children to do the same. We will later discuss the origin and history of the Kālacakra Tantra in greater detail. We may just mention now that for the Kālacakra practitioners nirvana is not something different and distant from everyday life, or, in other words, from samsara. Their equality is the core of tantric teachings. A tantric practitioner does not avoid poison; on the contrary, he readily drinks and transforms it into the nectar of wisdom. Thus Shambhala dwellers are not renunciants or ascetics; they enjoy all pleasures of samsara, simultaneously using them as the means of liberation. Thanks to their positive attitude towards the material world, Shambhala's inhabitants are said to have developed quite advanced technology, as well as medical and astrological systems. This is the testimony of Tibetan texts that are believed to have originated in Shambhala. There are also descriptions of special skylights made of lenses acting "like high-powered telescopes to reveal life on other planets and solar systems" (Bernbaum, 11). The King possesses a glass mirror that enables him to see all that is happening miles away. "Stone horses with the power of wind" and "techniques for transmuting one chemical substance into another and ways of harnessing the energy of natural

forces such as wind" (Bernbaum, 11) are also described in the texts. The inhabitants of Shambhala possess all sorts of extraordinary psychic powers such as "the ability to read others' thoughts, to foresee the future, and walk at very high speeds" (Bernbaum, 11). They may also become invisible if the circumstances demand it, for example in case of intrusion or attack. As a matter of fact, Alexandra David-Neel described an episode which she witnessed herself in Tibet: a Tibetan lama running with such a great speed that his run reminded more of a flight, with his feet seeming to be off the ground.

Though Shambhala may look like a real paradise for the lay people, the high lamas consider it to be rather a "Pure Land", an intermediary state between samsara and Nirvana. As long as it obeys the laws of karma, as long as it is temporary it can only be a way to Nirvana, the final liberation beyond any dualities of good and evil, heaven and hell. Good and compassionate deeds are not enough for enlightenment. Only when the fruit of wisdom is ripe can one become awake. Shambhala is believed to be the best place on earth for accumulating such wisdom.

The present, being the twenty-first King of Shambhala is *Ma-gag-pa* (Skt. *Aviruddha*) As of 1978 A.D. *Ma-gag-pa* is said to have been on the throne for fifty years, therefore his successor, *Mi-yi seng-ge* (Skt. *Narasiṁha*), will be enthroned in 2028 A.D. as the reign of Shambhala Kings lasts one hundred years. There will be thirty-two Kings altogether. As their succession will be taking place, corruption and dilapidation will be taking over humanity. Religions will no longer be duly respected, an aggressive materialism will rule the planet and spiritual attainments will be of no value. The barbarians (*Kla-Klo*), fighting each other for power, will be finally united under an evil King. After the whole world has submitted to him,

the hidden land of Shambhala will reveal itself and the King, overwhelmed with rage that he is not the only ruler of the world, will lead a war against Shambhala. Gar-je K'am-trul Rinpoche maintains that "by the force of previous prayers and the infallible truth of cause and effect, the goddess *Re-ma-te*, (Ri ma ti) in accordance with her wishes, will come to be the queen of this *La-lo* [*Kla-Klo*] king" (K'am-trul Rinpoche, 11). She will point to Shambhala as yet unconquered. The *Kla-klo* king will have all kinds of mighty terrible weapons at his disposal. This final battle of Shambhala with the *Kla-klo* army will be held in 2425 A.D. Then the thirty-second Shambhala King, *Rudra Cakrin* (The Wrathful One with the Wheel), will lead his army against the barbarians and will destroy them, thus bestowing the "perfect age" for at least a thousand years[6]. At that time the whole world will turn into Shambhala with no sickness or poverty, and no need to work to earn a living. Even "great saints and sages of the past will return to life to teach true wisdom, and many will attain enlightenment through the practice of the Kālacakra" (Bernbaum, 23).

As we can see, the Shambhala myth is not very different from other dreams and hopes of humanity for an ideal society. Similar legends, stories and fairy tales exist in the folklore tradition of every country. The dream itself is very human and

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[6]. There is a controversy on the terms of the "golden age". Lamas use the number of Shambhala Kings and the length of their reigns for their calculations. The dates they get are different because they take the Buddha's death as the starting point of their calculations, and according to some Gotama died a little before 2000 B.C. while the usual version implies it happened around 500 B.C. Besides, some lamas suggest that sometimes the reign of Shambhala Kings lasted more or less than a hundred years. The common belief is that the thousand years of the golden age will be followed by yet another battle with the subsequent advent of Maitreya.

practical, there is nothing philosophically sophisticated and extraordinarily lofty about it. No one would mind living a happy, healthy and long life free of worries, diseases and wars. However, in addition to this rather mundane part of the Shambhala legend, it bears a great spiritual significance for the Tibetan people. First of all, it presents the ideal model of human existence, which is only justified by the quest for the ultimate liberation. Under the present tragic circumstances of the Chinese invasion and the extermination of Buddhism in Tibet, the legend may acquire even more tangibility. Though scholars (Tucci, Hoffmann) agree that the opposing *Kla-klo* forces are of Muslim origin, it is a peculiar coincidence that some of them will actually be Chinese: "In the future, there will be many nationalities of *La-los* including the *Ho'u-zi*) and *T'en-dr'uu* (*then-gru'u*) people in China..." (K'am-trul Rinpoche, 9). Even though we are separated by four or five hundred years from the time of the final battle against the *Kla-klo*, the prediction may already have some historical relevance. Thus, it is not hard to imagine what immense importance the legend, especially its last part, connected to the victory of Buddhism, has for the Buddhist believers who were deprived of their homeland and their faith. If we look at the victory which is supposed to be universal, from the Buddhist standpoint, we will see not just a mere overcoming of external enemies denoted as *Kla-klo*. It could be as well interpreted as the annihilation of the internal darkness of one's ignorant ego and the triumphal manifestation of love and compassion towards "the last blade of grass" that is to be liberated. The kingdom of Shambhala where everyone is preoccupied with spiritual practice for the purpose of eventual liberation can be perceived by believers as a pier, or some kind of departure point for the distant shore of nirvana. Since

Shambhala is extremely hard to reach, especially in our time of degeneration, believers pray to be reborn there, to participate and die in its great battle against barbarians thus ensuring their next rebirth during the millenium that is said to follow the battle. To make that possible, one should accumulate enough merit. In this respect the belief in Shambhala has much in common with the Maitreya myth which is equally popular among Buddhists. In fact, the decisive Shambhala battle over darkness is the prerequisite for the inauguration of the golden age, hence of Maitreya's advent. Both myths encourage the acquisition of good karma that alone can bring one closer to Shambhala or (and) Maitreya.

Whereas the myth of Maitreya is prevalent in all Buddhist countries, Shambhala has an especially personal link with the Tibetan heart. It is a part of life of every Tibetan, and now probably more than ever. The belief that high lamas had their previous incarnations in Shambhala and will be reborn there eventually is widespread. The Panchen Lama, for example "is supposed to have been Mañjuśrīkirti, the King of Shambhala who simplified the teachings of Kālacakra and founded the present line of twenty-five Kings" (Bernbaum, 29). According to the Tibetans' beliefs, the Panchen Lama will incarnate as Rudra Cakrin and other high lamas will participate in the war as his officers. "Many of them [viz., the lamas] already know the names and the ranks they will have: The Dalai Lama's senior tutor, for example, will be a colonel in charge of the 5th Division, with the name of Senge Rinchen" (Bernbaum, 30).

Parallel Legends.

The existence of a rich variety of similar myths sharing the same archetypal concept (we may here call it "Shambhala

archetype") points to the vital significance this concept holds for a human psyche. It reflects a deep inherited striving for "another", "better", "ideal" state of existence. The common feature of all Shambhala-related myths is a belief in heavenly kingdom on earth. We will now look at some Eastern and Central Asian myths that may clarify some aspects of Shambhala.

The Hindu parallels of Shambhala are so strikingly similar that they might put into question the precedence of the Tibetan myth. According to the Hindu viewpoint, the periods of darkness and golden age constantly succeed one another. When the conditions get especially bad, as for example, presently, Visnu manifests himself in various reincarnations[7], nine of which have already been manifested. The tenth incarnation as Kalki is yet to come. The **Purāṇas** describe the pitiful conditions of that age in almost the same terms as Kālacakra texts:

> Wealth and piety will decrease day by day, until the world will be wholly depraved. Then property alone will confer rank: wealth will be the only source of devotion; passion will be the sole bond of union between the sexes; falsehood will be the only means of success in litigation; (quot. in Bernbaum, 82)[8]

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[7]. The ten reincarnations of Viṣṇu are as follows: Fish, Tortoise, Wild boar, Lion with human head, Dwarf, Dasta Rāma, Rāma, Kriṣṇa, Buddha*, Kalki.

* This particular reincarnation of Viṣṇu is not approved by Buddhists. On the contrary, it is suggested that Buddha might have been an incarnation of Viṣṇu, not vice versa. According to the great Tibetan historian Bu-ston (1290-1364) the ninth incarnation of Viṣṇu was not Shakyamuni. "This legend which claims Vishnu to be regenerated as Buddha reflects the fact that Buddhism declined and was absorbed into Hinduism in India from the 8th century, thereby creating confusion between the images of Buddha and Vishnu with each other" (Damdinsuren, 46).

[8]. From the **Viṣṇu Purāṇa** 4.24, trans. in H.H. Wilson, trans., The Vishnu Purana: A System of Hindu Mythology and Tradition, ed. F.Hall (London: Trubner& Company, 1868) 4:

Viṣṇu will then reincarnate as Kalki in the village called Shambhala (!). He will gather and lead the great army against the evil forces riding a beautiful white horse[9], holding a blazing
sword in his hand.

> He will then re-establish righteousness upon earth; and the minds of those who live at the end of the age of strife shall be awakened, and shall be pellucid as crystal. The men who are thus changed by virtue of that peculiar time shall be as seeds of human beings, and shall give birth to a race who shall follow the laws of the golden age of purity (quot. in Bernbaum, 83)[10]

According to E.Bernbaum, there is one Sanskrit version which directly refers to Rudra Cakrin as Kalki[11]. Besides, some

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225-27.

[9]. In some versions of the legend Viṣṇu's horse is called Kalki. Indian art often depicts Viṣṇu with a winged steed, or with the head of a horse. In the Tibetan myth the Shambhala King enters into "the meditation of the best of horses" (Bernbaum, 84) thus defeating the barbarians. In both myths horse symbolises the supernatural power of both Kings to overcome the evil forces.

[10]. From the ***Vishnu Purana***, p. 229.

[11]. E. Bernbaum refers to Vira and Chandra, Kalacakra-Tantra and Other Texts, Pt.1, p.339. *Klong rdol bla ma* mentions Kings of Shambhala with the names of incarnations (Skt.*avatar*) of Visnu in *Sham bha la'i zhing bkod*, Tibetan Buddhist Studies, 1:134-35.

of his successors have the names of Rama and other incarnations of Viṣṇu. It is said also that the name of the general, the assistant of Rudra Cakrin in the crucial combat, will be Hanumanda. It sounds almost the same as Hanuman, the monkey god of the **Rāmāyaṇa** who helped Rama to defeat the demon Rāvaṇa. Both Kalki and Rudra Cakrin are supposed to be born in Shambhala. The only difference between Hindu and Buddhist legends is that in Hindu version Shambhala is a small village the location of which is not specified. The region that Kalki is supposed to conquer lies between the Ganges and Yamuna river in the North India. There is an actual place called "Shambhal" in that region. However, **Kalki Purāṇa**[12] claims that after each conquest Kalki avatara always comes back to his birthplace, meaning it is located elsewhere. Hindu texts, as well as Tibetan, describe Shambhala as an extraordinary place. Kalāpa, the capital of the Tibetan Shambhala, also appears in the Hindu myth but simply as a place where a sage King named *Maru* dwells. He is supposed to join Kalki in the final battle after which he will become the avatāra's assistant in establishing the golden age.

Though the Hindu influence on the Buddhist myth is quite possible, "the prophecy of Kalki represents a fairly late development of Hindu mythology that may have borrowed some of its features from Buddhism" (Bernbaum, 84). Obviously, it was rather a mutual influence, and it is hard to judge which one was prior to which. Leaving the question of seniority aside, the importance of the two myths lies in the sense of the universality of the prophecy they share. It is interesting to point out that the Hindu version suggests that the Kalki

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[12]. See Hazra, R.C. Studies in the Upapuranas, Calcutta Sanskrit College Research Series, No 2 (Calcutta), 1958) 1:303-8.

avatara advents not just once but whenever the world, in its eternal revolution, reaches its utmost decline. This feature might be as well applied to the Tibetan version.

Mahābhārata mentions another blissful northern country that has a great resemblance with Shambhala. It is *Uttarakuru* (Northern Kuru):

> On the south of the Nila mountain and the northern side of Meru are the sacred Northern Kurus, O King, which are the residence of the siddhas, the enlightened sages. The trees there bear sweet fruits and flowers...Some of the trees, again, O King, yield fruits according to the will of the plucker. There are again some other trees, O King, that are called milk-yielding. These always yield milk and the six different kinds of food of the taste of Amrita itself [nectar of immortality]... The people of that country are free from illness and are always cheerful. Ten thousand and ten hundred years they live, O King, and never abandon one another (quot. in Bernbaum, 89)[13]

Modern scholars[14] date the myth of Uttarakuru as far as pre-Buddhist times. Its location lies in the same direction as Shambhala's, to the north of the Himalayas which is often identified as Kunlun mountains, Pamir or Altai. This situates Uttarakuru in the basin of Tarim (Sītā) river, or somewhere in Siberia, the most probable locations of Shambhala. E. Bernbaum suggests that Uttarakuru could once have been an actual country located in a beautiful oasis of the Tarim

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[13]. From the ***Mahābhārata*** 6.8, adapted from trans. in Pratap Chandra Roy, trans., The Mahabharata of Krishna-Dwaipayna Vyasa, n.ed. (Calcutta: Datta Bose & Co., 1925) 4:18 (given as ***Mahābhārata*** 6.7).

[14]. See Harshe. Mount Meru. p.140; Buddha Prakash. Uttarakuru, "Bulletin of Tibetology 2", No.1 (1965), p.28; Nirmal C. Sinha. Notes and Topics, "Bulletin of Tibetology 2", No 1 (1965), pp.35-36; Shyam Narain Pande. Identification of the Ancient Land of Uttarakuru, "The Journal of the Ganganatha Jha Research Institute 26", Pts. 1-3 (1970), pp.725-27.

river, and its rich natural resources could have been poetically praised with a permissible embellishment. Like Shambhala, Uttarakuru is said to be able to conceal its mysteries and treasures by becoming invisible to ordinary human eyes.

Another mysterious country closely related to Shambhala is *Olmolungring*[15]. It is considered to be the birthplace of *Bon*, the indigenous religion of Tibet. In both cases we have the same concept of the new enlightening teachings coming from a remote mysterious country, exactly the same way Kālacakra teachings have originated from Shambhala.

For Bon practitioners, Shambhala is Olmolungring which is located northwest of Tibet behind the snow mountains, and where its King, Shenrab Mi-wo (*gshen Rab mi ao*), the great teacher of Bon, was born fourteen centuries before Buddha Shakyamuni, i.e. in 1917 B.C. The description of Olmolungring is very similar to that of Shambhala. It has the same lotus-flower shape with eight regions - petals. The only difference is that instead of the palace in the center we find a mountain *Yungdrung* (*gyung drung*), (nine swastikas - nine ways of Bon) with Shenrab's throne on it. It is also surrounded by temples, cities and parks. Just as the Indian yogis dared to search for the Kālacakra teachings in Shambhala, some Tibetan yogis travelled to Olmolungring for the additional Bon teachings. As the legend states, before his visit to Tibet Shenrab shot an arrow thus creating a passage through the mountain ranges, therefore everybody who decided to discover Olmolungring should follow "the arrow way" which is as

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15. *Ol* symbolises the unborn; *Mo*, the undiminishing; *Lung*, the prophetic words of *Shenrab Mi-wo*, the founder of Bon; and *Ring*, his everlasting compassion (The Handbook of Tibetan Culture, 13).

romantic as a flight recommended for the seekers of Shambhala. Bonpos consider a great honour to be reborn in Olmolungring and pray for this precious opportunity as Buddhists pray for their rebirth in Shambhala. Shenrab, as well as Kalki and Rudra Cakrin, will too appear at the dark age of degeneration. He will not fight, though, but will bring a new form of the old teachings to revive the abandoned spirituality.

Keeping in mind the antiquity of the Bon religion and its initial resistance to the adoption of Buddhism, followed by the subsequent assimilation with the latter, the Bon influence on the later Buddhist mythology is quite conceivable. On the other hand, the Bon Canon was not written down until long after the Buddhist Canon was established, and much of the Bon Canon appears to be copied almost verbatim from the Buddhist Canon, which was translated from Sanskrit and Chinese.

In China we also find myths relating to Shambhala. In the T'ang dynasty poem <u>A Song of Peach-Blossom River</u> a fisherman discovers a wondrous hidden country, an embodiment of an ideal Taoist society. An older Chinese myth tells us about the palace of the goddess *Hsi Wang Mu*, the Queen Mother of the West situated in the Kunlun mountains[16]. Here we have the same concept of paradise on earth with sorrows abandoned and

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[16]. One of the possible locations of Shambhala. The location of Hsu Wang Mu palace corresponds almost exactly to Shambhala location as some lamas see it. According to Chinese legend, the goddess lives on a jade mountain north of the Kunluns and west of the Moving Sands "...which could refer to the shifting dunes of the Takla Makan desert....This would put her palace northwest of Bodhgaya, the place of the Buddha's enlightenment, in or beyond the Tarim Basin, the most likely location for the historical version of Shambhala" (Bernbaum, 87).

wishes fulfilled, where once every six thousand years Hsi Wang Mu invites all the immortals to taste the peaches of immortality growing in her garden. According to the Chinese sources, King Mu of the Chou Dynasty has visited Hsi Wang Mu around 1000 B.C. Lao Tsu, the legendary founder of Taoism is believed to have left for the abode of Hsu Wang Mu where he is supposed to reside until now. E. Bernbaum mentions the version suggested by Wolfgang Bauer according to which Hsi Wang Mu refers to the original name of a place west of China[17]. The myth of Hsi Wang Mu which is older than the Shambhala myth could have been known in the areas of Central Asia where the teachings of Kalacakra presumably took their origin.

The Scythian nomads of the Asian steppes, who lived around the first millennium B.C., had legends about a place similar to Shambhala and Uttarakuru. E. Bernbaum's suggestion is that

> Since the Scythians were probably an offshoot of the Aryan tribes who invaded India in the second millennium B.C. and brought with them the Vedic mythology of Hinduism, the myth of Uttarakuru - and Shambhala - may have originated among the nomads of Central Asia and migrated along with them to the Indian subcontinent - and to Europe as well (Bernbaum, 91)

Other relevant parallels can be traced in some regions of Central Asia, for example Kirgyzia and Mongolia. According to the Kirgyz legends, there is a great mountain named Muztagh Ata situated in the western end of the Kunluns with the city Janaidar on its summit. A magical plum tree grows there resembling the peach tree in Hsu Wang Mu kingdom, but unlike the peaches bringing immortality to everybody who

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[17]. See Bauer, W. Search for Happiness, p.95

tastes them, the plums of Janaidar release from immortality. The legend tells of a sage, who got a chance to return home by eating the plums. This is reminiscent of the Buddhist ideal of Bodhisattva who refuses to enter Nirvana until all sentient beings achieve it. It is noticeable that the sage was taken back home by a rider on a white horse. The same features that are present in other Shambhala related myths are found here: the sacred mountain and lake, magic fruits, sagacious inhabitants, inaccessibility of the blissful land and the gift of immortality that it grants.

Russian folklore had tales and legends about mysterious cities, islands and countries ruled by the sages. Some of the *Starovery* sect (Rus. Old Believers) who escaped the persecutions of the Orthodox Church in the sixteenth century A.D., settled down in the Altai[18] mountains, between Mongolia and Siberia. They have a legend about *Belovodye* (The White Waters), also known as the White Mountains or White Island, a land of truth and wisdom hidden far behind the great deserts and mountain ranges. Altai inhabitants have stories about the attempts to reach the blessed country[19]. In his book Altai-Gimalai (Altai-Himalayas) N. Roerich describes how he learned from the local inhabitants, that the first news of Belovodye had come from Kalmyks[20] and Mongols. The original source was

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[18]. Altai was the crossroads of different religious routes such as Old Believers, Buddhism in its Tibetan Lamaist form and Shamanism.

[19]. Russian explorer of Tibet N.M. Przheval'sky mentions that about 1860, one hundred and thirty Old Believers from Altai had reached the lake Lobnor in Tibet "presumably in the search for the blessed land of Belovodye" (Rudzitis, 21).

[20]. Kalmyks - Buddhist population of Siberia. In the sixteenth century A.D. Buddhism had spread from Tibet to Mongolia, Buryatia and Kalmykia in the East Siberia and many

probably Buddhist, though for the Old Believers who blamed the deviation of the Official Church from what they believed to be the purest form of Christian faith, Belovodye became a symbol of their own aspirations for the future restoration of the true spiritual Church of Christ. Nevertheless, the location of Belovodye corresponds to the Tibetan one found in ***Kanjur*** - east from the Tarim basin in the mountains of northern Tibet. Edwin Bernbaum suggests that the name "White Waters" may refer to the salt deposits east of the Takla Makan Desert. We may draw here another parallel, i.e. another name of the Tarim river is Sita as we mentioned before. If this is a Sanskrit name, it means "white". Can "White Waters" of the Russian legend refer to that?

We find the story of the earliest journey to Belovodye in the "Sacred Legend of Belovodye", an account recorded in 1893 in one of the Russian Orthodox monasteries in the Tambov region. The legend tells us about the very dawn of Russian Christianity. In 987 A.D. Prince Vladimir (known also as Vladimir the Red Sun) sent special embassies to different countries in order to choose the right religion for Russia (then Rus')[21]. There were six delegations altogether. Then,

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Mongol and Kalmyk tribes had come under Russian influence with Lhasa continued to be the "spiritual home for the Russian subjects of Asiatic origin" (Ngawang Rabgyal, An Overview of the Tibet-Russia Relationship, "Tibetan Review", vol.XXV, No 2, February 90, p.10). In 1767 Russian Tsarina Catherine the Great (1729-1796) received a letter and a gift from the Seventh Dalai Lama (1708-1757) for the first time in the history of Russian-Tibetan relationship. At the same time the first Buddhist monastery in Buryatia that exists until now, was built.

[21]. In 986 A.D. Prince Vladimir, a grandson of the Great princess Olga, carried on the talks with Bulgarian Mohammedans, Khazar Jews, German Christians and Greek Christians from Byzantium. In 988 Russia accepted the Greek

according to his own prophetic dreams and the advise of father Sergei, a saint whose opinion he highly respected, Vladimir decided to send the seventh embassy to Belovodye that according to the ancient legend was an abode of divine beauty and truth that could be reached only by the called ones. Father Sergei was appointed by the Prince to head the expedition consisting of 333 of his best warriors and servants. Fifty-six years had passed after that and nobody expected them to be back, when one day an old monk arrived to Kiev from Constantinople. Expecting his death soon, he disclosed a remarkable story at the confession. He was that father Sergei who had been assigned to find Belovodye. He then told a striking story of his adventures and hardships on the way, and how finally, having lost all his people, he reached the holy land of Belovodye known also under other names such as "The Land of Living Fire", "The Land of Luminous Spirits", "The Land of Living Gods". Father Sergei said that the time had not come yet to comprehend all the sublime wisdom of Belovodye dwellers but it would be revealed to the trustworthy ones in due time. Only seven people can reach Belovodye once in a hundred years and only one can stay there as long as he wishes. Father Sergei mentioned also that from there he was able to see all the events in the world and make "out of body" visits to different places such as Kiev and Constantinople. This is reminiscent of the high technologies of Shambhala described in the **Kanjur**.

Another name that should be mentioned in connection to Shambhala is the legendary personality of *Gesar*[22], or Gesar

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Orthodox form of Christianity.

[22]. The origin of the epic is unclear. As A. Fedotov points out " the greater part of the epic must have originated from among the nomadic tribes of North Eastern

Khan, a famous hero of the national epic ***Gesar of Ling,*** is very popular with Tibetans, Mongols[23] and other Central Asian populations to this day. A number of scholars such as G.Roerich, Kozin, Nekludov, Stein, Houston, Fedotov, and recently Namkhai Norbu, interested in the topic. Alexandra David-Neel, a famous explorer of Tibet, devoted a book The Superhuman Life of Gesar of Ling to the epic hero in which Gesar's link with Shambhala is mentioned. In the course of history Tibetan lamas added new features to the original epic and "transformed it into a vehicle for expounding Buddhist

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Tibet" (Fedotov, A. Versification in the Epic of Gesar of Ling. "The Tibet Journal", vol. XIX, No 1, 1994, pp.17-21). The nomadic tribes who would come to the North Eastern Tibet from the steppes of Central Asia, could have considerably influenced Tibetan folklore with their own epics and songs, therefore ***Gesar of Ling*** represents a compilation of various folklore motifs. *Ge-lugs-pa* school of Tibetan Buddhism believes that the epic was composed by a Tantric lama-bard whereas the nomads of *Kham* and *Hor* provinces of Tibet consider ***Gesar of Ling*** to be a "poetical record of wars fought in the ancient past" (Fedotov, 18). According to Namkhai Norbu, "even if we accept the historicity of the king of Ling, portrayed in the legends as a kind of superhuman hero endowed with the same miraculous magic powers as a yogi, *mahasiddha* or *terton* (*gter-ston*), (revealer of sacred treasures), it is difficult to establish exactly when he lived and whether he could really have accomplished, in the span of a single life-time, all the innumerable deeds recounted in the poems..." (Namkhai Norbu, 4). G. Roerich refers to the attempts of "Grunwedel and Potanin to prove that the Gesar legend was influenced by the legends about Alexander the Great popular in the East,and that the name 'Gesar' is nothing but a Tibetan interpretation of the word Kaiser-Caesar" ([translation is mine], G. Roerich, p.331, 1993).

[23]. Since the story of Gesar Khan became first known in Europe (1836-1839) owing to the translations of its Mongolian versions, it is the Mongolian versions of the epic that has been studied by scholars more extensively than the Tibetan ones.

doctrines" (Bernbaum, 81). For the *Nying-ma-pas* Gesar is an incarnation of Padmasambhava who has returned to defeat forces of evil. As well as Kalki and Rudra Cakrin Gesar possesses a supernatural horse that is believed, according to some versions of the epic, to be an incarnation of a bodhisattva. This horse first brings Gesar to Shambhala and then into the final battle against the evil forces. As a protector of Tibet and the Buddhist faith Gesar became identified with the King of Shambhala. According to a widespread belief, he is supposed to be reborn in Shambhala as a warrior and then will play a crucial part in saving Tibet and the entire planet. For the purposes of the present thesis the personality of Gesar and the interpretations it receives in the modern Buddhist world deserve more attention, therefore we will come back to the subject.

All the myths discussed above lead us to make a few conclusions and raise a few questions:

1) All of the myths point to approximately the same geographical location of Shambhala (or Shambhala-like places), i.e Kunlun mountains or Pamir region. Can we take this unanimity as an indication to a former or perhaps still existing kingdom concealed in the impassible mountain ranges? Otherwise, what was the original source of these myths? Do they simply imitate each other, or do they represent a common human longing for a better world?

2) All the myths that could develop at the same time as the Shambhala myth and could have influenced it share the idea of certain spiritual courage and perfection as necessary conditions on the way to Shambhala, or like places. Should we understand the strivings of a seeker in spiritual terms, i.e. as an arduous journey undertaken by a soul in search for liberation? Should we as well perceive the enemies that he

(she) might encounter as internal natural obstacles to be overcome on the way to enlightenment? We are not able to answer these questions unless some further research is conducted. However, we may note that the concept of a final battle against the barbaric forces pertains to the Kalki and Shambhala myths only. May we assume that it was a later addition to Buddhist and, possibly, Hindu myth as well, provoked by the Islamic threat? Could the concept of "good versus evil" combat be an adoption from other religion(s)? If this is so, we may suspect that the Shambhala legend originally aimed at spiritual growth involving a great amount of psychological struggle, and only later, under specific political circumstances, this fight was extended to external ones.

We attempted here to look at some parallels to the Shambhala myth found in the neighbouring Tibet countries. Similar myths can be certainly found all over the world - in ancient Greek mythology, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, Islam, Sufism, even Communism. Homer's "Odyssey", The Middle East epic of Gilgamesh, medieval legends of the Holy Grail, Dante's "Divine Comedy" can be classified as related to Shambhala for all of them raise the questions of the ultimate spiritual quest.

KĀLACAKRA. HISTORICAL SURVEY

The history of the appearance of Kālacakra teachings in India and later in Tibet is a relatively well-studied subject compared to the huge body of ***Kālacakra Tantra***, yet untouched by scholars. History of Kālacakra is important for our purposes as the only original textual evidence of the possible existence of Shambhala. In Kālacakra Tantra Shambhala is presented not as some sort of supernal abode but as a secluded, yet tangible place.

Shambhala and Kālacakra are closely interrelated, moreover each is the source of the other. Shambhala became known to us primarily through the Kālacakra texts, which in their turn claim the mythical kingdom to be their place of origin and perseverance. Unlike the majority of Buddhist sutras composed in the form of Buddha's conversations with his disciples, Kālacakra Tantra portrays a sermon by the Buddha in the form of the Kālacakra deity to the Shambhala King Sucandra (regarded as the emanation of the bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi[24]), who along with his ninety-seven subjects came all the way from Shambhala by magical powers of flight, to the stupa of *Dhānyakaṭaka*[25] in South India as it sheds more light on possible locations of

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[24]. "This is significant because Vajrapāṇi is the chief redactor of the Vajrayāna teachings. Vajrapāṇi and his various emanations serve as the intermediaries between the Buddha and ordinary human beings in the transmission of the Vajrayāna doctrines" (Newman, 58).

[25]. Dhānyakaṭaka (Skt. accumulated rice) that "has been located in the proximity of the village of Amaravati in the Guntur District of Andhra Pradesh in India, was the site of a marble stupa of considerable dimension, probably dating back to the second century A.D. or earlier, that was razed to the ground in the nineteenth century by a petty raja. Vestiges of the stupa are now preserved in museums of India and Europe (Orofino, 12).

historical Shambhala if one ever existed.

Kālacakra tantra belongs to the highest class of *Anuttara*[26] Yoga tantra which implies that its practitioners are likely to reach enlightenment in their lifetime. Unlike other Anuttara tantras that appeared in India, Kālacakra had been preserved for thousands of years in the land of Shambhala until it was introduced to India in the tenth century A.D. by an Indian yogi.

Kālacakra consists of three main parts. ***Outer Kālacakra*** deals with astrological, historical and geographical issues; in other words, with external worlds. ***Inner Kālacakra*** concentrates on the human body; it includes information on channels, winds, drops and mind; ***Other Kālacakra*** is the ritualistic part referring to various initiations and rites. While other Anuttara tantras normally have four initiations, Kālacakra has eleven[27], the two principal stages of which are the generation and the completion processes.

The Tibetan sources disagree on the date of the Kālacakra preaching. Some maintain that it happened right after the Buddha's Enlightenment[28]; others believe that the preaching at

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[26]. Anuttara (Skt.) - that which nothing is superior to.

[27]. For the detailed descriptions of the Kālacakra initiations see Geshe Lhundup Sopa, Jackson, Roger, Newman, John.The Wheel of Time The Kalacakra in Context, Madison, Wisconsin: Deer Park Books, 1985., Dalai Lama, Hopkins, Jeffrey, Tenzin Gyatso. Kalacakra Tantra. Rite of Initiation. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1991., Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey. Kalacakra Tantra. Dharamsala, H.P:Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1994.

[28]. According to H,Hoffmann, Buddha preached the Kālacakra Tantra at the two places simultaneously, i.e. at the Vulture peak near Rajagrha and at the stupa of Dhānyakaṭaka in southern India near the sacred mountain Shriparvata associated with the name of Nagarjuna. The stupa "must have been an important centre of Buddhist Tantrism" (Hoffmann, 124).

Dhānyakaṭaka took place before the Buddha's Parinirvana, i.e. in the year of his passing away[29]. Sucandra brought the teachings back to Shambhala where he wrote down the twelve thousand verses of the *Mūlatantra* (basic text) with the later commentaries, and built the Kālacakra mandala. The successor of Sucandra, *Mañjuśrikīrti*, (also known as *Yaśas*[30]) simplified the original tantra in order to regain the interest and respect to Vajrayāna of thirty-five million rishis (Skt. ṛṣi) who left Shambhala to become the followers of another faith as they found Kālacakra tantra too long and complicated[31]. As H. Hoffmann points out, this episode "is obviously a reference to

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[29]. According to *Rva* and *Brc* traditions, the Buddha preaching of Kalacakra at Dhānyakaṭaka took place in the year of his Passing Away. However, *mKhas-grub-rje* argues that the preaching followed the Supreme Enlightenment of the Buddha (Roerich, 159).

[30]. Yaśas became the first Kalki (Tib. *rigs-ldan*) of Shambhala "by combining all the castes of Shambhala into one vajra family" (Newman, 64). "In the Buddhist Kalacakra literature the epithet "*kalki*" assumed the specific meaning of sovereign-master, from "*kalkah*", a kind of tenacious paste or a paste used as plaster or cement, because he binds in unity, he cements the four castes, by conferring on them the adamantine initiation" (Orofino, 12). This event had been prophesied by the Buddha (see Newman, p.64).

[31]. King Yaśas taught the rishis ***Śri Kālacakra***, the abridged tantra (*laghutantra*) that nowadays represents the basic tantra for the Kalacakra system. Later Yasas taught some additional tantras entitled ***Śri Kālacakratantrottara Tantrahṛdayanāma*** (Peking #5) (Newman, 63). He also redacted the ***Śri Kālacakranāma Tantragarbha*** (Peking #6) which is a condensation of the ***Paramādibuddha sadaṅgayoga sādhana*** (Newman, 63). Those texts mostly consist of the *buddhavacanam*. The following two texts composed by Yasas, survived till today: the ***Pradarśanānumatoddeṣapariksha nama*** (Peking #4610) and the ***Triyogahṛdayaprakaśa nāma*** (Peking #2087).

a clash with some foreign religious system" (Hoffmann, 126). Unfortunately he does not specify what "religious system" that could be. What he does mention, though, is the apparent presence of the foreign influences in Kālacakra. H. Hoffmann affirms that the very fact that Kālacakra originated in the mysterious country of Shambhala with the definite non-Indian location, points to the probable contributions of the foreign teachings [32] to the Kālacakra system.

Historians agree upon the introduction of the Kālacakra to India sixty years before its appearance in Tibet. i.e. in 966. Kālacakra became known in India under King Mahipala of Bengal who reigned c. 974-1026 (Hoffmann, 126). However, as Hoffmann, Newman, Roerich and other scholars indicate, the stories about the person who first brought Kālacakra into India vary, even within the accounts of the same historian.[33] The Indian custom according to which initiated yogis receive a new name after each new initiation, makes the task of identification rather difficult.

Bu-ston, the famous Tibetan historian, describes two versions of the story as presented by two Tibetan traditions, i.e. *Bro* and *Rwa*.[34] According to *Rwa* tradition, Kālacakra with

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[32]. H.Hoffmann thoroughly analyses these possible foreign influences in his article Kālacakra Studies I. Manichaeism, Christianity and Islam in the Kālacakra Tantra.

[33]. *Sum-pa mkhan-po* writes: "The Kālacakra was brought from northern Shambhala by Tsi-lu-pa, Pi-to-pa or the great Kālacakrapāda, which may be correct" (quot. in Hoffmann, 126).

[34]. "*Rwa*" and "*Bro*" are the names of the two Tibetan clans (Newman, 66). *Rwa* derives from the translator *Rwa Chos rab* who traveled to Nepal to study under pandit Śamantaśri for five years, ten months and five days. After that both the guru and disciple went to Tibet and continued their work of translators and promulgators of Kālacakra.

Bro tradition takes its origin from Somanātha who,

its commentaries known as the ***Bodhisattva Corpus*** arrived in India during the reign of three kings Dehapala, Jaugangapa and Kanauj. A pandit of outstanding knowledge called Cilu (*Tsi lu*) decided to find the hidden kingdom of Shambhala in order to receive the highest teachings of the Kālacakra as he realised that enlightenment could not be achieved without them. On his way he met a stranger who asked him where he was going. Having learned that Cilu was determined to obtain Kālacakra teachings, the stranger suggested that Cilu could listen to them right there. With the realisation that the man was the emanation of Mañjuśrī[35], Cilu prostrated himself before him. Thus, having received all the teachings, Cilu brought them back to India. Later he resided in the present day Cuttack (Orissa) and had three disciples upon whose request Cilu wrote down the commentaries.[36] One of those three, Pido (or Pinda)[37] ācārya

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together with *Bro Shes rab grags*, translated the ***Vimalaprabhā*** into Tibetan.

[35]. Newman points to a number of discrepancies between the *Rwa* and *Bro* versions. For example, he notes that "none of the Kalkis in the time frame we are considering (after Pundarika and before Raudra Chakrin) are emanations of either Manjushri or Avalokiteshvara" (Newman, 72).

[36]. According to Newman, there are only two works attributed to Cilu in Tibetan ***Tanjur***: a commentary on ***Guhyasamāja*** (Peking #2709), and a short instruction on the ***Sadaṅgayoga*** (Peking #2090). "Neither of these texts is intrinsically related to the Kalacakra or the ***Bodhisattva Corpus*** (Newman, 72).

[37]. Newman pays a special attention to Pinda acarya considering him to be the most probable historical figure in promulgation of the Kālacakra doctrine. Dipaṁkaraśrijñāna known also as Atiṣa, refers to Pinda as his guru in his ***Bodhipathapradīpa*** (Peking #5343; vol.103, 21/5/1-4), and describes Pinda as a monk who "came from Suvarṇadvipa, i.e. Java" (Newman,72).

One prayer of the *Bro* tradition speaks about the

became a distinguished expert in ***Bodhisattva Corpus***. He, in his turn, became a guru of Kālacakrapāda the Elder. It is said that Kālacakrapāda the Elder went to Shambhala (Newman, 68) with the assistance of White Tara. On his way he met Avalokiteśvara who led him to the maṇḍala situated in the Shambhala capital, Kalāpa. Having received all the necessary initiations he came back to India. His disciple Kālacakrapāda the Younger, also known as "Bodhipa" and "Nalendrapa". He went to Nālandā and placed the mantra of "the Powerful One in Ten Forms", the symbol of the Kālacakra,[38] above the gates of the monastery and below it he wrote the following verses:

> Those who do not know the ***Paramādibuddha***[39], do not know the ***Nāmasaṃgīti***. Those who do not know the ***Nāmasaṃgīti***, do not know the Gnosis Body of Vajradhara. Those who do not know the Gnosis Body of Vajradhara, do not know the Mantrayana. All those who do not know the Mantrayana, are samsaric: they are separate from the path of Bhagavan Vajradhara (quot. in Newman, 69)[40].

"blessings of Kalki Śrīpāla at the end of the southern ocean" (Newman, 72) from which Newman assumes that Pinda ācārya and Kalki Śrīpāla are one and the same person (Newman, 72).

[38]. Kālacakra mantra is represented by interwoven Tibetan letters (***OM AH HUM HO HUM KHYA MA LA WA RA YA HUM PHAT***) of different colours symbolising the unity of the macrocosm and the microcosm. It often appears above the gates of Tibetan monasteries.

[39]. The ***Paramādibuddha*** is the basic or root tantra (mulatantra) of the Kālacakra system. The ***Paramādibuddha*** has not been preserved in Sanskrit and was not translated into Tibetan, therefore ***Śri Kālacakra*** together with its commentary ***Vimalaprabhā*** written by the Kalki Puṇḍarīka, the son of Shambhala king Yaśas, presently functions as the *mūlatantra*.

[40]. The verses are taken from the ***Vimalaprabhā*** (S) 33b, (T) 419-420. ***Nāmasaṃgīti*** is the short title of the ***Mañjushrijnānasattvasya-paramarthanāmasaṃgīti*** (Peking #2) (Newman, 86).

Kālacakrapāda then debated with five hundred pandits of Nālandā monastery and, having defeated them, initiated them as his disciples.[41] Soon Kālacakra doctrine became widespread among different social groups such as royal family members, kshatriyas and merchants. Pandit Śamantaśribhadra of Nepal heard Kālacakra from the five masters and followed one of them, Mañjukirti.

The *Bro* tradition says that Kālacakra came to India during the reign of Kalki Śripala of Shambhala. A couple who practised the Yamantaka yoga was rewarded with the birth of a son. When the boy grew up he heard about the Dharma taught by bodhisattvas in the North and he became determined to receive that Dharma. The trip to Shambhala endangers the life of anyone who attempts to reach it, therefore Kalki Śripala appeared before the youth asking his destination and purpose. The story is similar to that of Cilu. Kalki initiated the youth into Kālacakra and taught him for four months. When the youth returned to India filled with knowledge "like a vase filled to the brim" (Newman, 70) he became known as Kālacakrapāda. Among numerous disciples of Kālacakrapāda, Nalendrapa became the most renowned as Kālacakrapāda the Younger. According to Newman

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[41]. In Hoffmann's opinion, it was not Kālacakrapāda, but Cilu himself who went to Nalanda and won the debate. He presumes that Cilu and Kālacakrapāda the Elder represent the same person whereas Kālacakrapāda the younger is just another name of the pandit Nadapada, who was the abbot of Nalanda monastery defeated by Cilu in the debate and became a master of Kālacakra teachings himself. Hoffmann writes: "In another place Padma dkarpo mentions that Tsi-lu-pa [Cilu] is also known as the "great Kālacakrapāda", whilst Nadapāda is also known "the Lesser Kālacakrapāda" (Hoffmann, 128).

The Blue Annals refers to both Kālacakrapādas as "father and son" (Roerich, p.755).

"some accounts say that Kālacakrapāda the Younger and Nalendrapa were guru and disciple.

The next in succession is Somanātha of Kashmir, the son of a brahman father and a buddhist mother. He was learning the Buddhist Dharma from pandit Brahmanapāda when the latter received the ***Sekoddeṣa***[42] and a commentary on the ***Sekaprakṛiyā***[43] from a disciple of Kālacakrapāda the Elder.
Somanātha read them and went to Magadha where he became initiated by both Kālacakrapādas. After that Somanātha won a debate with a Kashmiri paṇḍiṭ Ratnavajra who, fearing to lose his disciples, asked Somanātha to leave. Thus Somanātha went to Tibet to introduce Kālacakra there.

As we mentioned earlier, *Rwa* and *Bro* traditions were the main streams bringing Kālacakra into Tibet[44] from the eleventh through the fourteenth century. Among the most famous scholars and propagators of Kālacakra in Tibet were the historians Bu ston (1290-1364) and Taranatha (1575-?), the founder of the Gelugpa school Tsong kha pa (1357-1419) and Sakya Paṇḍiṭa (1182-1251). Kālacakra became an inseparable part of Gelugpa

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[42]. The ***Sekoddeṣa*** is a section extracted from the fifth chapter of the ***Paramādibuddha*** (Newman, 84).

[43]. The ***Sekaprakṛiyā*** (Peking #7 & 4609) treats the Kālacakra initiation rituals. It is composed of three blocks of verses from the ***Śri Kālacakra***, two from the third chapter and one from the fifth (Newman, 86).

[44]. George Roerich in his Studies in the Kalacakra points to the fact that although Kālacakra is often believed to have been brought to Tibet by Dipaṅkaraśrījñāna, or Atiṣa, "Somanātha seems to be the first preacher of the Kālacakra doctrine in Tibet and is said to have been the introducer of the Sexagenary Cycle (1027 A.D.)" (Roerich, 164). According to G.Roerich, Atiṣa appeared in Tibet fifteen years later (about 1042 A.D.) and died in 1051, also his biographies do not mention his preaching of the Kālacakra.

study and practice. Tashilhunpo monastery was especially famous for its school devoted to Kālacakra. The Third Panchen Lama wrote a book ***Shambha la'i lam yig*** (Guidebook to Shambhala)[45]. It belongs to ***Lam-yig*** genre (Tib. passport or guidebooks), and according to Newman, the part that describes the route to Shambhala and the means to get there "is based, to a great extent, on another 'guidebook' translated from Sanskrit, the ***Kalāpāvatara*** (Entrance to Kalāpa), the capital of Shambhala; Peking #5908" (Newman, 77).

In his Studies in the Kalacakra G.Roerich gives the most detailed account on Tibetan scholars and historians who reported on Kālacakra and Shambhala in different times. Roerich also tells us about the first Europeans who spoke about Shambhala[46] and made an actual attempt to find it (Roerich, pp.154-158). Besides that, he mentions some *Shambhala'i lam-yig* texts of Kham province that are extremely difficult to find. The Eighth Dalai Lama introduced Kālacakra to his monastery Namgyal which subsequently became a centre of Kālacakra study and practice. The present fourteenth Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, represents the Kālacakra lineage that takes its origin in the ***Paramādibuddha*** teachings at the Stupa of Dhānyakaṭaka. He became the first to introduce these teachings to the West.

The Chinese invasion that took place in Tibet in 1959

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[45]. Albert Grunwedel translated the text into German and published it in the "Abhandlungen der Kon" (Bayerischen Akad. der Wissenshaften, vol. III, 3, Munchen, 1915).

[46]. Jesuit fathers, Stepen Cacella and John Cabral having learned about the existence of Shambhala during their visit to Bhutan, decided to find the route leading to Shambhala in 1627 (Wessels. Early Jesuit Travellers in Central Asia. 1603-1721, the Hague: Martinus Niihoff, 1924). One of them has possibly become a prototype of father Perrault, the hero of The Lost Horizon by James Hilton.

scattered Tibetan refugees all over the globe. As a result, Tibetan Buddhism has been flooding the Western world for the last few decades. Having lost its treasure house, the ancient wisdom of Tibet, disseminated, yet alive, is searching for new places, new followers. Another reason for introducing the highly esoteric knowledge of Kālacakra to the West lies in the scarcity of its experts that due to its extreme complexity, have never been abundant. From the eleventh century until the Muslim invasion of the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries that expelled Buddhism from India, Kālacakra "became an international religious phenomenon" (Newman, 76). It spread to Burma, Kashmir and Nepal, and from Tibet - to Mongolia and China. According to Hoffmann,

> From the standpoint of religious history the Kālacakra represents the last attempt to revive the slowly declining and degenerating Buddhism of India by liberal borrowings from the powerfully developing systems of Shivaism, and, in particular, of Vishnuism, and also from foreign, western teachings, thus increasing attractions for both the priesthood and the laity (Hoffmann, 123).

In the opinion of many scholars (Roerich, Hoffmann, Newman, Bernbaum), the Kālacakra system undoubtedly became exposed to the influence of foreign religions during its Indian period. G. Roerich suggests, for example, that Kālacakra could have been connected "to the ancient *Kālavada* system and its Iranian counterpart - the Zervanite system" (Roerich, 159). Unfortunately, too little is known about Kālavada to make certain parallels of this school with Kālacakra[47].

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[47]. ***Anguttara-Nikāya*** (ed. Morris, part II, 22, 2; 198, 8) mentions the Kālavada as one of the different philosophical systems; "The ***Buddhacarita*** (ed. Cowell, XVIII, 55) shows the Buddha pronouncing himself on the Kālavada. Both the Kālacakra and the Kālavada have an intimate connection with astrology" (Roerich, 159). Stcherbatsky gives a full account on Kālavada in <u>La Theorie de la Connaissance et la Logique Ches les</u>

The Puranic Kalkin myth mentioned earlier, has so much in common with the myth of Shambhala that scholars tend to view it as the main prototype for the later Shambhala myth. G.Orofino calls the kingdom of Shambhala a mere "transposition and adaptation of a myth already found in the Vishnuite tradition" (Orofino, 11). From that we may infer that the whole system of Kalacakra did not originate in Shambhala as it claims[48], but rather having entered India from some Central Asian or (and) Near Eastern location, absorbed Indian and other mythologies. Thus having being transformed and supplemented in this cultural and religious melting pot, it finally reached Tibet where the Kalkin myth acquired its Buddhist counterpart with all necessary additions and alternations. It is hard to imagine what the original Kālacakra looked like prior to its arrival to Tibet. ***Śri Kālacakra*** with its commentary ***Vimalaprabhā*** which is the most authentic source of all the data on Shambhala, is, as we said earlier, only a part of vast and lost Kālacakra literature. The clues could have been lost with it. Though still demanding a great deal of scholarly efforts to be proved, this explanation seems to be a very comfortable one. It is much more convenient, than, for example, searching for the traces of Shambhala in other religions including the indigenous Bon of Tibet. Until now the lack of written evidence keeps this search

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Bouddhistes Tardifs (Paris, 1926) (Roerich, 159).

[48]. This statement, however, totally depreciates the *Buddhavacana* and rejects the fact that Kālacakra had been taught by Shakyamuni at the stupa of Dhānyakaṭaka to the Shambhala King. Most of the buddhists probably find this explanation plausible enough not to look for other versions of Kālacakra origin. According to G. Tucci, "origination of Kālacakra in Dhānyakaṭaka as expounded by the Buddha is a pious tale". At the same time he admitted that "there is much truth in the rest of the narrative" (Tucci, 1949 p.212-213).

at the hypothetical level. Similarly, we have very limited knowledge on those pandits and yogis who introduced Kalacakra to India and later brought it to Tibet. Who were they? What schools or lineages did they belong to? What made them seek ***Paramādibuddha***? The oldest written source on the history of Kalacakra that has reached us is Bu ston's account of 1329. His sources remain unknown.

John Newman argues that despite its obvious dependence on the Kalkin myth, "it does not mean that the Buddhist Shambhala is a mere fiction" (Newman, 83). J.Newman suggests that the location of the Buddhist Shambhala as described by ***Vimalaprabhā***, corresponds to the Uighur kingdom[49] (flourished circa 850-1250) if we suppose that Shambhala existed in the eleventh century A.D., i.e. the time of the Kālacakra's appearance in India. The verification of this theory certainly needs a separate study of "the entire matrix of the 11th century Asian history together with the motives of the Kalacakra myth-makers" (Newman, 84).

There could be a large variety of religious trends and tenets that Kālacakra could possibly have passed through on its way to Tibet. In his Grammar of the Tibetan Language Csoma de Koros maintains that Kālacakra arrived in Tibet via Kashmir (Csoma de Koros, 192). We know that Kashmir at that time was one of the areas where Indian Buddhism prospered. This does not, however, exlude a possibility of other religious influences, such as, for instance, Kashmir Shaivism. According to both G. Roerich and Hoffmann, the problem of possible

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[49]. ***Vimalaprabhā*** locates Shambhala on a latitude north of Tibet, Khotan and China, north of the Sītā river that according to the descriptions of the Chinese traveler Hsuan tsang (7th century) and the Tibetan traveler, *Man lungs Guru* (13the century) was identified with the Tarim river in Eastern Turkistan (see Newman, 84).

Manichean and other Near Eastern influences on the Kālacakra deserves scholars' attention. One of the main centres of Manicheism and Buddhism, and a possible location of the Shambhala kingdom, was West Turkestan. E. Bernbaum assumes that "Sogdian merchants from the region around Samarkand and the valley of Ferghana spread the teachings of Mani to China and could conceivably have taken the Kalacakra to India" (Bernbaum, 44). The same author informs us that H. Hoffmann "claims to have traced the route described by the guidebooks to Shambhala into this region of the Pamirs where he thinks the kingdom[50] once existed" (Bernbaum, 44). The archaelogical finds in the area, for example a huge Buddha statue of Karatepe, proved the long history of Buddhism there that, in spite of the Muslim invasion, survived until the twelfth century. If we can trace the history of Pamir Buddhism it could open yet another perspective on Shambhala and Kālacakra.

In his book Po Tropam Sredinnoi Asii (Trails to Inmost Asia) G. Roerich writes about a Bon monastery in the province of Hor that had images of Kālacakra deity. Whether it presents a later Buddhist addition to Bon or it has native derivation is not known. He also mentions some Bon texts on Kālacakra (p.335) that have never been examined. According to John Reinolds, the Bon version of Kālacakra is considered to be incomplete and classified as "kriyātantra", not "anuttaratantra". The Bon version of Shambhala, the legendary kingdom of Olmolungring, is located in the same area of the Pamirs between Samarkand and Alma-Ata. Comparative analysis of Kālacakra in Bon and Buddhism could be very beneficial for the Kālacakra-Shambhala studies. It is very likely that the role of Bon in the history of

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[50]. Old Tadjik people living in the Pamir region know about Shambhala as "Djambal" meaning in Tadjik a "fairyland".

Kālacakra (and Tibetan Buddhism in general) is far underestimated. We know that the time of the Kālacakra arrival to Tibet corresponded to the period of Bon revival there, headed by Shenchen Luga, a discoverer of important Bon texts in 1017 A.D. It is also known that the country *Zha-Zhung*[51], the cradle of the Bon teachings, situated to the West of Tibet (in the eighth century it was annexed to the latter), had immediate cultural connections with the Persian empire in the West and with the Iranian speaking Central Asia. The Bon teachings are believed to have come to Zha-Zhung from Tazig (modern Tadjik) or Iranian Central Asia. This area is specifically pointed out by scholars as the most feasible source of the Kālacakra, hence the most plausible location of Shambhala.

So far we discussed the Shambhala legend as presented in ***Kanjur*** and ***Tanjur***, as well as its counterparts in other mythologies. But the legend appearing to be the strongest belief in heavenly kingdom on earth, had a great impact on the Western world. In the following chapter we will see how the history of Shambhala continued in the West. In other words, we will turn our attention from the "classical" Shambhala of Tibetan Canon to its more "folklore" versions that emerged almost ten centuries later.

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[51]. The remnants of Zha-Zhung can still be seen in the North and West remote regions of Tibet.

SHAMBHALA AND WESTERN INTERPRETATION

Chapter three of the present thesis traces the development of the West's interest towards Shambhala. The newer interpretations the legend received in the West, namely in Tsarist and Soviet Russia, USA and Nazi Germany, and the most odd
ways of its manipulation there, enrich our perception of the original version making visible its hitherto unknown facets.

Since the time of its arrival to the West, the legend of Shambhala fascinated and inspired many of its religious and political figures. The following chapter tells about people whose life and work were dedicated to Shambhala ideals that they were eagerly committed to realise, and about those who saw the Shambhala legend as a powerful vehicle for realisation of their egotistic cravings. Sometimes the first and the second merged in peculiar curves of history.

Although the legend of Shambhala reached Europe in the seventeenth century A.D.[52], it acquired its popularity in the western world in the nineteenth century when it became one of the favourite subjects of the mystics, orientalists, and all sorts of adventure-seekers. Subsequently, its psychological and geographical frontiers have considerably extended. Having been transplanted in the alien soil, the legend bore the

[52]. According to G. Roerich, the first mentioning of Shambhala by Europeans was made by two Jesuit fathers, Stephen Cacella and John Cabral during their visit to Bhutan. In 1627 they paid another visit to Tibet in order to find the road to Shambhala (Xembala, as they called it) which they mistook first for Cathay (China) and then for "Great Tartarea". (See Roerich, G. Studies in the Kalacakra., p.157-158). See also Wessels, C. Early Jesuit Travellers in Central Asia, 1603-1721, Hague: Martinus Niihoff, 1924, pp.314 ff.

fruit of an unprecedented novelty of explications. Western imagination began to create its own Shambhala folklore.

The keen western interest in Tibet has a history of three centuries beginning with the aforementioned visits of European monks to the land of snow. This history has passed through the stages of missionary strivings, mere curiosity including many vain attempts to reach Lhasa[53], scientific and political cravings, and finally, utter adoration that grew especially intense in the twentieth century. This particularly acute attention and reverent attitude to Tibet and the eastern culture in general, can be partially explained by tremendous political turmoils of the twentieth century that shattered much of the former beliefs and ideals. The confused and desperate "lost generation" looked around in search for the "lost horizon".

The geographical elevation of Tibet became equal to its spiritual loftiness that lies pristine, mysterious and promising as "a hermetically-sealed vessel enclosed by vast walls of ice and stone, surrounded by inhospitable, freezing deserts" (Bishop, 34). Tibet started being looked upon as a utopian land, as Shangri-la[54], "a storehouse of spiritual

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[53]. The full account on the history of the discovery of Tibet by European travellers and their journeys to Lhasa, is found in Bishop, P. Dreams of Power, ch.2.

[54]. This word became a part of the world dictionaries as an oriental-style synonym to the Greek "utopia" owing to James Hilton's book Lost Horizon that was first published in 1933 and fascinated the mystically inclined Americans and Europeans. According to Bernbaum, Hilton's book was inspired by the writings of the Catholic missionary Abbe Huc who travelled in Tibet two hundred years after the mentioned above Jesuits Cacella and Cabral, and other Christian missionaries. (See Bernbaum, E. The Way to Shambhala, pp.18-20). The author of the Lost Horizon could have been as well influenced by Nicholas Roerich's Shambhala published in 1930,

wisdom", and finally "as a landmark from which the West has struggled to achieve a sense of its own identity" (Bishop, 41).

Social and political reasons aside, there were more subtle psychological grounds for this longing for philosophies and religions of the East. Jung classified such a longing as "responses of the psyche" (Bishop, 48) in the world that has been too extroverted, too preoccupied with the study and control over external matters such as science and technology, and almost completely neglected the inner space, that is predominately revered in eastern cultures as a keystone of religion, i.e. of man's connection with cosmos.

Meanwhile Jung criticised both western and eastern approaches as being too attached either to "outer" or to "inner man". Those seemed to be the two extremes to appease. Many were the attempts to find the "golden mean", to elucidate the enigmatic West-East antagonism.

We shall now see how such attempts were undertaken in Russia, the country that due to its geographical location, possesses a rare opportunity to intermix Asian and Western features. This unique amalgamation inspired Russian philosophers for centuries. Various movements of philosophical thought such as "Slavophils", "Westernists", and later "Vostochniki" (Rus. Orientalists) and "Eurasians"[55],

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and by other writings of that author.

The Reader's Digest Great Encyclopedic Dictionary introduces Shangri-la as "any imaginary hidden utopia or paradise". Both "utopia" and "shangri-la" were words invented by English writers with the time difference of four hundred years.

[55]. "Vostochniki" and later "Eurasians" were particularly preoccupied with Russia-Orient rapprochement. Stressing The Asiatic heritage of Russia, "Vostochniki" called for the "fusion of Slav and Oriental under the benevolent rule of the

aimed at defining the balancing role of Russia in the West-East controversy. They were seeking synthesis and harmony, the harmony as powerful as being able "to combine the two great initials of spiritual nature - imagination and reason, and to unify the global history within our civilisation" [translation is mine] [56]. This trend of Russian philosophy became known as "Russian idea" which later was to constitute one of the core issues of Russian literature. In a nutshell, this idea implies some kind of exceptional spirituality, a national panacea that implies a certain salvific potential on a global scale. Salvation here is viewed as purely spiritual, not in terms of imposition of new political system or super-advanced technology. A sense of unification, of brotherhood and "sobor" (Rus. "gathering", also "temple") is inherent to

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White Tsar" (Van der Oye, D.S., Tournament of Shadows, "Tibetan Review", vol. XXIX, NO 1, Jan. 94, p. 16). The myth of the "White Tsar" was invented by N. Przheval'sky, the famous explorer of Asia. In 1887 he wrote: The nomad Mongols...the Mussulman Chinese, and the inhabitants of Eastern Turkestan...are all more or less possessed with the idea of becoming subjects of the White Tsar, whose name, equally with that of the Dalai Lama, appears in the eyes of the Asiatic masses as surrounded with a halo of mystic light" (ibid., p.16). Travelling extensively in Asia, including Mongolia and Tibet, Przheval'sky was well familiar with the Shambhala prophecy of the future Redeemer-King, therefore we may infer that he based his idea of the "White Tsar" on Shambhala legend. Due to his status of a national hero and close connection of Przheval'sky with the Emperial family as a tutor of the thirteen-year-old Tsarevitch Nicholas, this idea received a wide response in Russian society.

[56]. These words belong to P. Chaadaev, the initiator of the "Westernists" movement. Chaadaev was a contemporary and friend of the famous poet A.Pushkin.

[56]. The October revolution was partially inspired by the same idea, though in its most distorted hideous form.

the "Russian idea[57]". N. Berdiaev, a well-known philosopher of the twentieth century, wrote: "...we have to rise above the two contradictions - eastern and western. Russia is a grand and complete East-West by God's will" ([translation is mine], quot. in Linnik,U. Vostok i Zapad. Conflict ili syntez?, (East and West. Conflict or synthesis? [translation is mine]) "Serdtse magazine", No 4-5, 1993, p.111).

Ostensibly owing to the aforementioned political instability and feebleness of old mentality, the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth in Russia, were marked by the especially strong quest for some core and unifying principle of all religious doctrines. To penetrate this principle meant to have the key to the fate of humankind. Besides those who saw Russia as the only future saviouress of the world, there were a few rare individuals whose views were not confined in a narrow nationalistic framework but had a universal vision. The most famous of these seekers were Elena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-1891) and the Roerichs. Their lives and work were to surpass the limitations of one's nation, culture and mind. Shambhala apparently became an exemplary model of such far-reaching ideals.

The Russian artist, writer and philosopher Nikolai Konstantinovitch Roerich became a living embodiment of this endeavor. His whole life was devoted to the establishing of a spiritual bridge between the West and the East. Roerich is known not only as an outstanding artist but also as a great connoisseur of Oriental art, culture, philosophy, and as an ardent traveller. His whole family shared that passionate

interest towards the East[58].

In 1923 the Roerichs commenced their famous Central Asian expedition that lasted five years and covered the vast territories in USSR, India, China, Mongolia and Tibet. During this journey N.Roerich created five hundred paintings[59] that became an unusual chronicle of the Central Asian countries and peoples. The aim of the expedition was to study the archaeological relics, to collect materials on ethnography, folklore and linguistics and to create the basis for future research works. The inner moving force of the expedition was the search for the traces of Shambhala that signified for the Roerichs the sacred unifying symbol of all human aspirations and all religious creeds. N.Roerich describes many legends that he collected about Shambhala, in his expedition diary <u>Altai-Himalayas</u> and in his book <u>Shambhala</u>.

Did the Roerichs ever find Shambhala? That we do not know. However, there are a few indications giving a positive answer to the question. Some of N.Roerich's paintings depict people that might look like Shambhala messengers. One of the paintings presents N.Roerich dressed in Oriental clothes and holding a glimmering casket in his hands, presumably a gift from Shambhala Mahatmas. The paintings can be as well the artist's phantasy. Once George Roerich was approached by a woman who asked him if Shambhala really existed? He immediately answered: "Yes, and I was there myself" (U.N.Rerikh. <u>Materialy Ubileinoi Konferentsii</u>, (<u>Materials of the Jubilee Conference</u> [translation is mine]) p.45). Being a

[58]. Earlier we referred to the works of George Roerich, a renowned orientalist, the elder son of Nikolai Roerich.

[59]. Some of these paintings are exibited in the Roerich's Museum in New York city.

scholar, George Roerich was probably less affected by the passion for mysticism than other members of the Roerichs' family, and such an answer could have been just an excuse on his part. Nevertheless, according to the discourses with G.Roerich recorded in Riga[60] upon his arrival to the Soviet Union in 1957, the Roerichs "had visited the secret laboratories of Shambhala and met with the Great Brothers and Sisters of the White Brotherhood" (Khramchenko, V. Mezhdunarodnaya Missiya Eleny Rerikh, (International Mission of Elena Rerikh [translation is mine])"Serdtse", No 1, 1993, p.20).

Elena Petrovna Blavatskaya (Madame Blavatsky) was the first propagator of Shambhala legend in the West. In 1851 in London she met Mahatma Moria who, she believed, was her destined spiritual mentor. She claimed that since that time her contacts, both physical and telepathic, with Moria and other "Himalayan Mahatmas" who presumably resided in Shambhala, began. However, her writings[61] on the subject are of the same cryptic character as almost all writings on Shambhala, and according to her biographer, A. Senkevitch, "we have to be very patient and delicate to be able to discriminate the wheat from chaff in the field of her

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[60]. These recordings are kept in the archive of R.R.Rudzite, daughter of the former president of Roerich's society of Riga.

[61]. E. Blavatskaya who inherited a writer's talent from her mother, wrote a few books, the first of which Isis Unveiled, had received an excited response from the public. Charles Darwin became the main opponent to the views expressed in the book. Her fundamental work The Secret Doctrine analysed the key problems of existence, the origin of the universe and humankind. Her most popular book From Caves and Jungles of Hindustan gives the panoramic view of India of the second half of the nineteenth century.

uncontrollable imagination, to discern fortuitous from eternal..." ([translation is mine], Senkevitch, 448).

According to J.Fuller, a modern theosophist, Blavatskaya spent two years in Tibet[62] studying under the guidance of Tashi-lama (Sinkevitch, 452). In 1875 together with Colonel Olcott, E.P. Blavatskaya founded a Theosophical society in New York. The society was the first to introduce the Eastern religion and philosophy to the West. Its goal was to establish the main body of the worldwide brotherhood without any discrimination of sex, nationality or religion; to study all the philosophical and religious teachings, especially those of the East and antiquity, in order to show that they all comprise the same truth; to investigate the supernatural phenomena and to develop man's extrasensory capacities. Theosophists believed that the world was ruled by the so-called spiritual Elders from Shambhala, also called the White Brotherhood[63].

In 1880 Mr.Sinnett, an editor of the Bombay newspaper "Payonir", found the so-called "mahatmas' letters" on his desk. Later, others began to receive similar letters full of lofty original thoughts and explanations on the basic notions of Hinduism and Buddhism[64]. In the twentieth century N.

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[62]. According to Russian poet and journalist V.Sidorov, Blavatskaya had spent about seven years in Tibet (Senkevitch, 452).

[63]. E. Blavatskaya claimed to have visited the secret centres of the White Brotherhood the members of which possessed supernatural esoteric knowledge and magical technologies lost since the time of the Atlantis.

[64]. Numerous expertises showed that the character of the words-division looked a bit Russian. These letters were published and became known under the title Letters of Mahatmas to Sinnett, or The Chalice of the East.

Roerich was to become a "postman" of the "sacred correspondence".

N. Roerich's interest in Shambhala could have been partly influenced by the Theosophists. Fifty years later after the historical meeting of Blavatskaya and Mahatma Moria, N. Roerich's wife, Elena Ivanovna Roerich, became, as she claims, a disciple of the same Mahatma Moria. Most of the writings of E.Roerich[65] represent telepathic messages received from the spiritual patrons of humanity. Surprisingly, the first meeting of Mahatma Moria with the Roerichs also took place in London. Does the fact that both Russian women report on the same guru prove the validity of his existence, or was his image simply adopted by Elena Roerich from the Theosophists? It is as well reasonable to surmise that E.Roerich could use an archetypal name of Moria for another person. In any case, since that time the Roerichs considered themselves to be the envoys of Mahatma Moria, who, in his turn, represented Shambhala and its enlightening mission on earth.

Besides the then popular ideas of the Theosophists, there were other sources of knowledge on Shambhala that N.Roerich was aware of. It is difficult to designate the time period when the rumours of Shambhala had reached Russia, but it was probably known there under other names. In the second chapter of "Evgeni Onegin" by A. Pushkin, we find the following: "There exist the saintly friends of people chosen by destiny. Their immortal family will once dawn upon us and will endow the world with bliss..." ([translation is mine],

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[65]. Her voluminous writings on "Agni Yoga" and Teaching of the Living Ethics being revered by the numerous followers of the Roerichs, are mocked by some as a bad imitation of Blavatskaya's Secret Doctrine.

Pushkin,A.S. Isbrannye Proizvedeniya, (Selected Works) vol.2., Izdatelstvo "Khudozhestvennaya Literatura, Moskva, 1965, p.33). N. Roerich was as well aware of the aforementioned Belovodye legend. In his book Serdtse Asii (Heart of Asia) N. Roerich also referred to a Russian monk who died in one of the monasteries on the Volga in 1925. The records found after his death described the way to the land of the Mahatmas and some indications to their teachings. It was found out that the monk had once travelled to the Himalayas.

The Russia-Tibet relationship having started in the sixteenth century A.D., acquired a rather interesting curve in the beginning of the twentieth century due to the activities of the Buryatian lama Agwan Dorjiev (1853-1938), a personality, equally politically and religiously significant. Having spent twenty years in the Drepung monastery in Tibet, he received an excellent training in philosophy and religion and obtained a *geshe* degree. Agwan Dorjiev became the tutor of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama. Using his great influence on the Dalai Lama, Dorjiev was trying to persuade him that Nicholas II was in reality an incarnation of Shambhala King[66], and that Russia as "the Northern Shambhala"[67] could be the only

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[66]. By that time Przhewalsky's idea of the "White Tsar" was still tremendously popular. We may note here that the tendency to see a wordly monarch as a divine incarnation was very strong in the East. In China, for example, the myth of Maitreya was used for different political ends. Thus, a few times in the history of China, the emperors proclaimed themselves to be incarnations of Maitreya (see Sponberg, Hardacre, 31).

[67]. On page 4 of Der Weg nach Shambhala Grunwedel mentions a book that is supposedly kept in St.Petersburg, Russia that traces back the Romanovs' dynasty to Shambhala.
According to J. Snelling, Dorjiev was reputed to have presented to the Dalai Lama a pamphlet that "contained an

"protector of the Tibetans and Mongols against Chinese, Japanese[68] and British oppressors" (Andreyev, 13). Being a Buddhist, Dorjiev was well aware of the powerful impact of Shambhala legend on the Asian peoples. His plan was to unify the Buddhist peoples of Mongolia, Tibet and Russia for the sake of Buddhism, security and prosperity of those nations. It was under the slogan of Shambhala that such a unification would have become possible. Dorjiev visited Russia on many occasions, met the Tsar and the Ministers as an envoy extraordinary of Tibet. His goal was to establish a Tibetan mission in St.Petersburg and to sustain further goodwill between Russia and Tibet.

These maneuvers of the Siberian lama panicked Great Britain so that it urgently assigned Younghusband's military expedition to Lhasa in 1904 to enforce a trade treaty on Tibet. Consequently, Dorjiev's name became notoriously known in connection with *The Great Game* that Russia and Great

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enumeration of the good acts of Emperor Nicholas II, in the direction of furthering the happiness of the world" (Snelling, 283). J. Snelling adds that "there is no evidence that Dorjiev ever wrote such a text, though one along apparently similar lines was certainly published by the Kalmyk lama, Dambo Ulyanov, under the title Predskazaniya Buddha o Dome Romanovyh i Kratkii Otcherk Moih Puteschestvii v Tibet v 1904-7 (Predictions of the Buddha about the House of Romanov and a Brief Account of my Travels to Tibet in 1904-7, Snelling, 283).

[68]. The Japanese also tried to exploit the legend of Shambhala recruiting some Mongolian lamas as agents. J. Snelling maintains that "during rituals performed in the datsans of Khorinsk aimak to hasten the intervention of the King of Shambhala, the lamas produced pictures in which the armies of Shambhala were shown emerging from a rising sun - 'an indication of Japan'" (Snelling, 244).

Britain led for the control over Tibet[69]. Some Western scholars, such as W. Filchner, consider Dorjiev to be a spy recruited by the Russian Intelligence in the end of the nineteenth century[70]. The personality of Agwan Dorjiev still remains enigmatic and before rendering any final judgement, some documentary support should be obtained. Unfortunately, the most precious archive that could shed considerable light on Dorjiev's life and work was destroyed completely in 1919 when the Buddhist temple (datsan) in Petrograd (now St.Petersburg), which served also as Dorjiev's residence, was looted by the Bolshevics. It is worth noting that this temple built in 1915 under close personal supervision of Dorjiev and with the participation of Fedor Stcherbatsky, N.Roerich, G.Roerich and others, was devoted to the Kalacakra deity.

Dorjiev, an ardent and skilful diplomat, was able to continue his work even under the Soviet regime. During that time he was recognised as the representative of Tibet in the

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[69]. A. Andreyev carefully studied the documents of the archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia and other archive documents, which led him to conclude that "the peculiar policy of 'courting' the Dalai Lama...seems to have less to do with possible designs on Tibet itself than with Russia's political and economical interests in neighbouring Mongolia and China" (Andreyev, 12).

[70]. However, A. Andreyev finds no proof of that opinion. He rather sees Dorjiev's work as "mediating and consulting service" for both Russian and Tibetan governments. According to another scholar, David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, who researched the issue of the Great Game, "England's decision to invade Tibet was motivated more by Viceroy Curzon's Russophobia than by a realistic assessment of Tsarist policy. Russia never really had a policy for Tibet. British perceptions of St.Petersburg intrigues at the Potala were nothing more than the flickering shadows cast by real tournaments elswhere in Central Asia" (Van der Oye, D.S., Tournaments of Shadows, "Tibetan Review", vol.XXIV, No 1, Jan.1994, p.19).

Russian federation. Besides his old dream of the unification of Buryatia, Mongolia and Tibet, his other great concern was the adaptation of Buddhism to the state atheist ideology[71]. His famous slogan was that "Buddhist doctrine is largely compatible with the current Communist tradition". A.Andreyev affirms that "it looks as though he wanted Buddhism, to him basically a godless ethical teaching rather than a 'religion', to merge with or even replace the officially supported atheism at some time in the future" (Andreyev, 13). The ideas of Buddhism and Communism compatibility were not unusual at that time. Since Buddhism, an atheistic teaching, proclaimed the equality of all living beings, it was declared the religion of the oppressed masses. Early Soviet political literature presented Buddhism as a "mighty movement of tremendous masses of the poor" (quot. in Benz, 155). However, this policy changed drastically under Stalin. In the mid-thirties lama Dorjiev did not avoid Stalin's repressions. He died at the age of eighty-six in the prison-hospital of Ulan-Ude.

Roerich and Dorjiev should have met at least during the Buddhist temple construction. Were they friends? Collaborators? Drepung monastery where Dorjiev spent two decades of his life belonged to Gelug school and was one of the Kalacakra studies' seats. It was also, as George Roerich informs us, the monastery with the greatest number of Mongolian lamas from whom Dorjiev could have learned about a possible Siberian location of Shambhala[72] which later allowed to refer to Russia as "northern

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[71]. One of his innovations was the establishment of the agricultural communes of lamas.

[72]. In Mongolian mythology Shambhala is believed to be located in Siberia, to the North from the centre of the Earth, mountain Sumbur-Ula (Meru). According to E.Roerich, "Until now (mid-twenties or thirties, V.D.) many Mongols and Tibetans link the notion of Shambhala not only with Siberia

Shambhala". There must be some connection between Dorjiev's years of study in Drepung and the construction of the Kalacakra temple in St.Petersburg. According to J. Snelling, Dorjiev "was a practitioner of Kalacakra and took Shambhala myths very seriously... he linked them with the potential he saw in the great heartland of Central Asia for a glorious Buddhist regeneration" (Snelling, 79). This could partly explain Dorjiev's zeal to unify the Buddhist peoples of Asia under supervision and protection of the Russian "White Tsar". Can we suspect that he was driven not only by ambitious political pursuits and that he used politics as a mere implement for the embodiment of loftier ideals? Dorjiev would not abandon his work under any circumstances. He was diplomatic and persistent enough to be able to find compromises with any government. Even during the years of Stalin's dictatorship he was still struggling to preserve the Buddhist tradition. Perhaps the two Buddhist monasteries in Buryatia existing until today, owe their survival to Dorjiev. Lacking more precise information on the religious side of Dorjiev's life[73], we cannot decide whether it was politics or religion that bore a primary significance for him, or, perhaps, as A. Andreyev supposes, both "were absolutely inseparable for him in the imperfect materialistic world of ours" (p.14). Was Dorjiev a Russian spy as it is accustomed to believe, or a Shambhala agent? Although the key to this mystery was probably burnt down together with

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but with Russia, as the land of the future attainments" (quot. in Rudzitis, 74).

[73]. The National Archive in Lhasa contains an interesting correspondence between the Tibetan and Russian government including that of Dalai Lama and the Russian Tsar. A. Andreyev points out that Western scholars are not yet familiar enough with these documents.

the lama's archive at St.Petersburg Buddhist temple, what is obvious to us is Dorjiev's devotion to the same unification, peace and integration ideals that we may call "Shambhala ideals" that as well inspired Roerich and Blavatskaya. Such devotion is always tinted with what we may call "spiritual patriotism". In its narrow sense this term can be similar to the "Russian idea" mentioned above. However, taken in a broader context, it may eventually expand, if not lose, its original national identity. Consequently, a utopian land like Shambhala becomes an ideal model for an earthly country, in Dorjiev's case, for his native Siberia and Russia that, as he believed, suited best for "Shambhala on Earth", or in his own words "Northern Shambhala". It may seem a generalisation, but we may also suspect that Dorjiev's struggle for the consolidation and prosperity of Buddhism in a generally non-Buddhist country was his modest contribution to the realisation of the Kalacakra prophecy.

At the same time, considering his close relations with the Third Dalai Lama, Dorjiev could have been a participant of the great geopolitical intrigue that was organised by his compatriot Zhamsaran Badmaev, an Imperial family doctor. According to this plan, the whole territory of China was to be annexed to Russia. Badmaev, being a relative of the Mongolian Jenghis Khan clans, was personally interested in the restoration of their former glory. If his plan succeeded, and the Qing empire of China was overthrown by Russia, the Mongolian clans could have restored their power in Tibet, regions of South Siberia and possibly in China.[74] Thus, the myth of Shambhala and "white tsar" could have been mere

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[74]. See Gusman, Vladimir. <u>Shambhala i Shambhality.</u> "22", Munich, 1989, No 63, p.175-176.

instruments in the hands of political conspirators. The myth, once used in political interests, can later enslave its own propagators and become firmly implanted in their minds. "Thus, Jenghis Khan began to be associated with Brahma and the future Mongolian ruler - with Maitreya" ([translation is mine], Gusman, 176). Perhaps, this explains the popularity of the Shambhala legend and certain mystical expectations connected to it at the time of the Roerichs' Central Asian expedition.

Coming back to the Shambhala epic of N.Roerich, we may add that besides the sheer scientific, cultural and religious ambitions of his mission, there were some political concerns that he was involved in, and some of them still remain rather puzzling, like those of his predecessor Lama Dorjiev. Igor Stravinsky once remarked about N. Roerich that "he looked as though he ought to have been either a mystic or a spy" (quot. in Snelling, 229).

In Altai-Himalayas we find passages reflecting N. Roerich's positive attitude towards the October Revolution and personality of Lenin. For example, we find such statements as: "The great personality of Lenin is devoid of negation...it was this integration that paved his way to all parts of the world...we have travelled through twenty four countries and really witnessed how peoples accepted the magnetic power of Lenin..." ([translation is mine], Rerikh, 1974, p.246)

Such an opinion reveals Roerich's complete unawareness, or perhaps, refusal to see things as they really were. Under the sway of the so-called Red Terror, thousands of churches (including the unique Buddhist temple of St.Petersburg) and monasteries, were looted and exploded, priests and monks tortured and murdered along with tens of thousands of innocent people. All that had been done in the holy name of

the Revolution that, as Berdiaev precisely remarked, was "whipping up the peoples towards the bright future" ([translation is mine], Berdiaev, N. Istoki i Smysl Russkogo Kommunizma, p.87 (Sources and Essence of the Russian Communism) [translation is mine], p.87).

We know that the Roerichs were in Finland when the Revolution began, and afterwards lived in USA and India. An emigrant isolation from the Russian life could create a considerable distortion of the Roerichs' view of it. In the twenties, the Russian Revolution, and the Soviet Russia became the embodiment of the hopes for changes, of a new era for humanity. In the beginning some representatives of the Russian intelligentsia welcomed the "transforming revolutionary wind". The Roerichs did not avoid this bitter mirage. In their innocence they went as far as to see the breathing of Shambhala in it.

In 1924 N. Roerich visited the Soviet Embassy in Berlin in order to gain the support of the Soviet envoys in Central Asia for his expedition. His plans were fully approved by Minister of Foreign Affairs Chicherin.[75] In 1926 the Roerichs received, with the permission of the same Chicherin, visas to enter the USSR. There they met with the members of the Soviet government Chicherin, Lunacharsky and N.K. Krupskaya, the widow of Lenin. N. Roerich presented to them his painting "Maitreya - the Victorious One" along with the unusual gift brought from the Central Asian expedition - a casket containing Himalayan soil "for the grave of our brother *Mahatma* Lenin" and a letter addressed to the Soviet

[75]. These documents are now kept in the personal archive of Chicherin at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR.

Government, ostensibly written by the Mahatmas[76]. Here is the full translation of this letter:

> We know in the Himalayas about your fulfillments. You have abolished the Church which had become a breeder of lies and superstitions. You have eliminated petty bourgeoisie that had become a conduit of prejudices. You have destroyed the prison of up-bringing, You have crushed the family of hypocrisy. You have burnt down the army of slaves. You have squashed the spiders of lucre. You have closed up the doors of night brothels. You have freed the land from financial traitors. You have acknowledged that religion is a teaching of the all-pervading matter. You have conceded the pettiness of private property. You have guessed on the community evolution. You have pointed to the significance of knowledge. You have bowed before the Beauty. You have brought all the might of the cosmos to the children. You have opened the windows of the palaces. You have seen the urgency of putting on new houses of the commonwealth. We have stopped the uprising in India when it was premature. We have also recognised the propitiousness of your movement and we are sending to you all our aid, confirming the unity of Asia!
> We know that many achievements will be accomplished in 1928, 1931, 1936. Greetings to all seekers of the Common Wealth! ([translation is mine]. from Thomas, A. Shambhala-Oasis Sveta, p.19 (Shambhala - Oasis of Light).

If we accept that the letter was composed by some Himalayan yogis whom the Roerichs might have met during their journey, the prophetic abilities of the first turn out to be rather poor and their very spirituality can be put into question. The prediction regarding "the great achievements" of the thirties sound almost like black humour, since these years were among the bloodiest in the history of Soviet Russia[77].

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[76]. The letter is presently kept at the same Chicherin's archive.

[77]. According to Andrew Thomas, Mahatma Moria did condemn Stalin's labour camps in one of the letters to

Perhaps, we are too near-sighted to understand the grandeur of the Mahatmas' plans, and some twenty million human lives is the right price for the future paradise! It is hard to image such blood-thirsty Shambhala inhabitants. Most likely, the author of the letter, whoever he was, took the teachings of Marx-Engels-Lenin as theoretically very beneficial for the human race, and even close to Buddhism[78] being completely unaware of the practical implementation of those teachings. But that is an excusable blunder for naive romantic people, not for the astute dwellers of the Himalayan peaks. The words denoting destruction and negativity are used too often in the letter. One way or another, the author of the letter remains unidentified and the last person who could have shed light on the whole matter, Svyatoslav Roerich, the younger son of the Roerichs, died in India in the nineties. However, the phrase "unity of Asia" sounds familiar and reminds of the grand Dorjiev's project.

We can also suppose that the Roerichs as the "envoys of Shambhala" were suggesting that Soviet Russia should accept the eminent guidance of Mahatmas, and it was Russia's rejection of it that resulted in tremendous tragedy for the country. In his letter to Roosevelt dated October 10, 1934, N. Roerich writes: "The Russian government received strict warnings in time, and we are witnesses of the sad results of their rejection..." (Quot. in Khramchenko, V. Mezhdunarodnaya

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E. Roerich, and expressed his wish to see the liberalisation and humanisation of the Soviet system. Was it not too late a regret for an enlightened seer?

[78]. Roerich, as well as Dorjiev, saw the resemblance of Communism and Buddhism. The Chinese invasion of Tibet and almost total destruction of Buddhism in the country proved this resemblance to be another man invented myth.

Missiya Eleny Rerikh, (International Mission of Elena Rerikh "Serdtse", No 1, 1993, p.19).

In 1926 the Mongolian government also received a gift from N.Roerich, his painting "The Great Horseman" depicting the leader of the last Shambhala battle, Rigden-Dragpo, or Rudra Cakrin.[79] A strong belief of Mongols in Shambhala was used by Sukhe Bator, fighter against the Chinese and White Russian rule and the founder of the Mongolian People's Republic in 1921. He was a ridiculous example of a Buddhist revolutionary. The following marching song was composed by him: "Let us die in this war and be reborn as warriors of the King of Shambhala!" (quot. in Bernbaum, 18). We may recall here another incident. Trying to get rid of the *Khutuktus* lineage of Mongolian lama-rulers, the Mongolian Party Congress issued an odd resolution: "...and as there is a tradition that after the Eighth Incarnation he will not be reincarnated again, but thereafter will be reborn as the Great General Hanamand in the realm of Shambhala, there is no question of installing the subsequent, Ninth Incarnation" (quot. in Bernbaum, 18).

Roerich and Dorjiev had much in common in terms of the enigmatic character of their missions. It is hard to say whether they were secret collaborators of Bolsheviks and

[79]. Another less known Roerich painting of that time presented Lenin with emphasized Mongolian features wearing a traditional Lamaist hat.

promulgators of their ideas in Asia, or preservers of Buddhism and Spirituality in general, disguised as Communist sympathisers for the sake of their success. In the twenties, Dorjiev was the organiser of "scientific and propagandist expeditions" to Tibet, the participants of which "the Commintern-recruited Buryats, Kalmycks and the Narkomindel (Ministry of Foriegn Affairs) emissaries, disguised as Buddhist pilgrims, were not only to preach the "world international", but also to carry a radio-station, a cinema projector, and some quantity of weapons for the Tibetan army" (Andreyev,13). Was there any connection between the Roerichs' expedition to Tibet that happened to take place at the same time and worried a lot the British intelligence service, and these "Commintern" crusades of Dorjiev? Shambhala, Buddhism and Communism were curiously intermingled in the Roerichs' and Dorjiev's lives.

The most extreme and scandalous hypothesis that could come out of the above information is that the roots of Bolshevism probably lie in some sort of secret society or cult claiming to be linked to Shambhala, but can it be Shambhala of the Tibetan legend?

However, if we come back to the sources, the ***Outer Kālacakra*** does contain some rather bellicous passages. In his Kālacakra Studies I. Helmut Hoffmann identifies the seven heretical or demon-kings who are to be conquered in the final battle of Shambhala. They are Adam (Ārddha), Henoch (Anogha), Abraham (Varāhī), Moses (Mūṣa), Jesus (Īśa), Mani (Mathanīya) and Mohammed (Madhumati) (Hoffmann, 1969, p.59). Thus, defining its enemies representing major world religions destined to be annihilated, Buddhism appears to us in its uncommonly aggressive form.

A vivid example of an "aggressive Buddhist" is the

legendary personality of Baron Ungern von Sternberg[80] who attempted to form the "order of Military Buddhists for an uncompromising fight against the depravity of revolution" (Ossendowski, 240). Unlike the Roerichs and the Red hero Suhe Bator, Baron Ungern perceived the revolution as the "curse which will conquer the world, blot out culture, kill morality and destroy all the people" (Ossendowski, 240). "Black Baron" aroused fear, hatred and respect as a merciless exterminator of the Red Commissars whom he saw as "murderers of all contemporary spiritual culture" (Ossendowski, 249). His Militant Buddhist Order was supposed to be based on the principles of a very strict monastic discipline. His plan to unify all Asian peoples resembled the one of Dorjiev. The difference was that Baron von Sternberg would prefer China to take the legislative authority. This united Asian state was to become a strong barrier against revolution and a preserver of cultural treasures. Whereas Suhe Bator was fighting for the Red Shambhala, Baron Ungern proclaimed that his soldiers would die for "Shambhala of the New Jenghis Khan-Maitreya" ([translation is mine], Gusman, 178). Another Shambhala-related legend that inspired Baron Ungern was the legend of Agharti. According to Ossendowski, who in his turn heard the legend from a Mongolian lama, in ancient times, there was a certain Mongolian tribe who hid themselves underground escaping from Jenghis Khan.[81] It is believed also that Buddha

[80]. Baron Ungern von Sternberg knew Badmaev who introduced him to the Mongolian *bogdo-gegen* and the Third Dalai Lama. "Black Baron" could have been another participant of Badmaev's Central Asian intrigue. His detachment was defeated and driven out of Mongolia.

[81]. This legend correlates with the Russian legend of the city of Kitezh that miraculously saved itself from Tatars' raid by disappearing under the water of the

Gotama had visited Agharti in his old age and brought from it some sacred learning. The latter is likely to be a parallel to the Kālacakra teachings that, according to a few Tibetan sources, Buddha had preached in the year of his Parinirvana. Then Agharti should have existed independently from Shambhala. Was it another formerly flourishing Asian kingdom whence Kalacakra could have taken its origin? Roerich mentions Agharti in his works, other than that there is no convincing information on that Shambhala subterranean counterpart. The etymology of its name is obscure.

The other two countries whose political leaders were particularly interested in the Shambhala legend were USA and Germany. We shall now discuss their visions of "Shambhala on Earth" thus completing the chapter on Shambhala in the Western world.

N.Roerich's inspiration by the legend of Shambhala took the form of the Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace. The aim of this international treaty that was signed by the representatives of twenty-one nations at the White House in the presence of President Roosevelt, is the protection and preservation of art and scientific riches. In 1933 at the Third International Roerich Peace Banner Convention Sir Frances R. Grant declared:

> The East has said that when the Banner of Shambhala would encircle the world, verily the New Dawn would follow. Borrowing this Legend of Asia, let us determine that the Banner of Peace shall encircle the world,

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Svetloyarskoe lake and turning into the abode of virtuous sages. From time to time one can hear the bells' ringing and chanting coming from the depth of the lake. This legend inspired Russian composer Rymski-Korsakov and writer Melnikov-Pechersky who used it as the plot for his novels In the Woods and On the mountains.

carrying its word of Light, and presaging a New Morning of human brotherhood (quot.in Bernbaum, 21).

Henry Wallace, a secretary of Agriculture of the United States, became a follower of Roerich's ideas. He persuaded Roosevelt to endorse the pact. In 1934 Wallace sent Roerich on a government-sponsored expedition to Central Asia "ostensibly in search of drought-resistant grasses, but according to *Newsweek magazine*, around the Department of Agriculture the Secretary's assistants freely admitted that he also wanted Roerich to look for the signs of the Second Coming" (quot. in Bernbaum, 21). E. Bernbaum maintains that Wallace probably associated the future Shambhala King with the coming Messiah. In 1940 Wallace won the vice presidency under Roosevelt. However, in 1948 his career was destroyed by a conservative columnist Westbrook Pegler, who published Wallace's correspondence with Roerich as "Guru Letters". E. Bernbaum remarks that "if Roosevelt had died before the 1944 election instead of after it, a man deeply influenced by the Tibetan myth of Shambhala would have become President of the United States" (Bernbaum, 22). In his book Shambhala-Oasis Sveta (Shambhala - Oasis of Light) Andrew Thomas[82] affirms that this could have saved thousands of lives in Vietnam and Korea, and that the reconciliation policy towards Russia and China could have started much earlier than it actually happened. Another American statesman strongly influenced by Roerich's ideas, was Cordell Hull, the founder of the United Nations. Andrew Thomas describes another episode of Mahatmas'

[82]. The real name of Andrew Thomas is Andrey Tomashevsky. Fleeing from the Russian revolution, his parents emigrated to Manchuria where he spent twenty years. He then lived in China, Japan and India studying with pundits, Buddhists and Taoists. He considered himself N.Roerich's disciple.

interference in the course of the world politics. According to him, this incident was shortly mentioned by *American Broadcasting* program. During the secret meeting of the Security Council attended by representatives of different countries, an unknown person suddenly stood up behind the presiding Sir Benegal Row. The tall stranger dressed in oriental clothes and sandals, made a few comments that contained the answers to all the agenda points and showed that further discussion was worthless. Was he one of the Mahatmas[83], a member of some "Shambhalic sect", or just a commercial trick of the Radio company?

Incredible as it may seem, but the names of Shambhala and Agharti were pronounced a quarter of a century later, at the Nuremberg Trials. The mystical theories that constituted the basis of German Nazism were analysed by French authors Pauwels and Bergier, in their book Utro Magov (Morning of the Magicians) that was published in the 1970s. In 1974 another book on the topic The Occult Reich by Brennan, appeared, but generally it was a repetition of the facts previously discovered by Pauwels and Bergier.

Utro Magov discloses the history of the secret cults that Hitler and his myrmidons belonged to and beliefs which they devotedly shared. Among those were the beliefs in the "Supreme Unknown" rulers of the world's destiny. One of these rulers' abodes was Shambhala presented as the city of violence and might, and another was Agharti. The original

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[83].Andrew Thomas suggests that the stranger was probably Mahatma Kut Khumi, one of Blavatskaya's mentors. He deducted this presumption from the fact that one of the stranger's phrases exactly corresponded to the one extracted from Kut Khumi letter written in 1882.

source of their knowledge, however, was the Gobi that some thirty-forty centuries ago flourished as a great civilisation. Here we find some similarities with the beliefs of the Rosicrucian Order.

The international fraternity of Rosicrucians[84] founded in the fourteenth century A.D., claimed to have preserved the ancient knowledge that is kept in Shambhala. The Gobi desert occupies a very distinguished place in the Rosicrucian system. They believe in a legendary oasis in the Gobi desert, a remnant of the ancient vanishing civilisation supposedly of Atlantis or Lemuria. According to Rosicrusian doctrine, this oasis was once an island in the sea inhabited by a godly race that, like Shambhala inhabitants, possessed supernatural powers. This sea extended throughout Central Asia and eventually transformed into a desert in the process of the world cataclysm. Like Shambhala, it is well concealed from the non-initiated.

Nazi occultists assumed that the emigrants of the Gobi were the forefathers of the Aryans. Thus, it was a matter of honour to conquer the entire territory of East Europe, Turkestan, Pamir, Gobi and Tibet in order "to return to the sources".

Swedish explorer of Central Asia, Swen Hedin, whom Hitler admired, was, according to Pauwels and Bergier, an important mediator in the process of foundation of the Nazi esoteric doctrines. Numerous expeditions to Tibet had been dispatched by the Nazis. In 1926 a small Tibetan and Eastern Indian community settled in Berlin. When Russian troops entered Berlin, among the killed soldiers they found a

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[84]. The alleged founder of the order, Christian Rosenkreuz (1387-1484), is believed to have spent many years in Central Asia. (Rudzitis, 83).

thousand Tibetans[85] in German uniforms. Hitler had personal contacts with a Tibetan known "as a man with green gloves" (Pauwels, Bergier, 58). Karl Gausgofer[86], one of the main ideologists of the group "Tule" to which Hitler and Rosenberg belonged, travelled a lot in India and Far East. He considered Central Asia to be the cradle of the German nation. Another group, "Ahenerbe" founded by a friend of Swen Hedin, Frederick Hilscher, became a part of "SS" in 1939 and its leaders joined Himmler's headquarters. This society had fifty institutes at its disposal supervised by professor Wurst, specialist in ancient texts who taught Sanskrit at the university of Munich. "Ahnenerbe" presumably had considerable contacts with Tibetan monasteries. One of its gains was to search for the traces of the Indo-Germanic race. In the midst of war Himmler organised an expedition in search for the Holy Grail that, as a symbol of sacred esoteric knowledge, had always been a synonym of Shambhala.

Hitler's mission, according to Pauwels and Bergier, surpassed the idea of world supremacy. His concern was the divine business of creation of a new advanced stage of the human race, the race of heroes and semi-gods. In this sense, the Second World war was not only a combat between democracy and fascism, totalitarian and liberal systems, it was also a "battle of gods".

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[85]. According to V. Gusman, Subhas Chandra Boss, a former leader of the Indian National Congress, took a pro-Hitler position and created his own sub-units that fought in Burma and Assam on the Japanese side. In Berlin, his "army" was presented by an Indian "SS" battalion (Gusman, 184).

[86]. Gausgofer was introduced to Hitler by Rudolf Gess, the last survivor of the group "Tule". He died in prison in 1989.

Germany, connected in Hitler's eyes with the ancient centres and sources of wisdom, was to free the earth of its scum born as a result of unfortunate mutations, and obstructing the re-establishment of the divine Aryan race. The fulfillment of these high-flown ambitions demanded human sacrifices to attract the supernatural powers.

Having realised the imminent failure of his enterprise, Hitler plunged into an eschatological rave. He ordered the execution of prisoners, his own compatriots, his relatives. The Berlin metro was flooded by his order. That caused the death of two hundred thousand people. Göbbels and Hitler urged the Germans to destroy their cities, plants, to blast the bridges and railroads to involve the earth in a sort of apocalyptic catastrophe. They proclaimed the death sentence to the world that did not deserve Shambhala.

Could insanity on such a scale derive solely from imperialist ambitions or simply from the ravings of a lunatic? Unquestionably, Hitler was far from being psychologically normal. But he was not alone in this contagious insanity. The power of the ideas that guided the Nazi movement pertained, to some extent, to a number of ancient legends and myths, one of which was the legend of Shambhala. Perhaps, this presumption needs a more thorough investigation than that of Pauwels and Bergier, nevertheless, it suggests a new perspective of interpretation of the facts that an official version suffices to explain by the "megalomania of a syphilitic and a sadist ... and a cowardly servility of the crowd" ([translation is mine] Pauwels, Bergier, p.52).

Agiotage around Shambhala did not stop with the Second World war. The legend continued to be misinterpreted and

misused in Russia as well as in the United States. Numerous followers of the Roerichs in Russia have created an odd mythology combining elements of Shambhala, UFO and stories about *yetis*, or abominable snowmen who ostensibly serve as Shambhala guardians and guides. According to this mythology, Shambhala is directly connected to all the UFO sightings, and *yetis* are supposed to operate the "flying saucers" and to communicate with people telepathically.[87] In this case, Shambhala is believed to be extraterrestrial with its closest base located on Venus. All this is closely related to Russia as the future birthplace of Maitreya. Thus, Russia is predestined to play the central role in the world history. Approximately in the 1970's or 1980's, a former Communist party member Valeri Averianov who got himself involved in parapsychology and mysticism, blamed Shambhala as a source of fascism and black magic. Averianov, on the contrary, represented the kingdom of Agharti as an antipode to Shambhala. Averianov and his followers whose aim was to consolidate the communist ideas, declared war on world fascism and Zionism symbolised by Shambhala!

Unfortunately, such comical phantasies attracted numerous advocates especially in times of perestroika and glasnost. Among them were many military men who considered Russia to be the only opponent to Masonic and Zionist forces of the world. The members of the nationalistic organisation "Pamiat'" (Rus. Memory) became deeply interested in Nazi Aryan theory and decorated their black uniforms with the

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[87]. For Tibetan and Nepalese people *yeti* is as real as a grizzly for Canadians. Travelling in Nepal, the author of the thesis heard numerous stories about yeti encounters with humans. Yetis are believed to communicate telepathically.

familiar swastika emblem. Nowadays there are several organistions like "Pamiat" in all major cities of Russia.

The United States did not avoid their portion of Shambhala psychosis, though of a less critical form. The hippie culture of the sixties and seventies, an essential part of which was a keen interest towards eastern religions, gave a rise to the so-called New Age movement. At large, it was motivated by the same old ideal of unity in diversity on the basis of the all-pervading spirituality. The same old idea of the West-East synthesis found one of its most deformed incarnations in the "tantric sex revolution" of Rajneesh Osho. At the same time a number of fantastic and prevalently preposterous accounts on Shambhala appeared. Among them are the books by Elizabeth and Mark Prophet, who called themselves "messengers". They mentioned the names of Mahatmas Kut Humi and Moria who are, in their interpretation, Tibetan (?) Mahatmas bringing the essence of "Christic love" to people. Another author, B.T. Spalding, presents Shambhala in the five volumes of his Teachings of the Masters of the Far East. His version of Shambhala resembles a Fairyland, perfectly fitted for a reunion of Buddha, Christ, Mohammad and all other great souls. Needless to say, such stories only add to the mystery wrapping the original legend.

The leader of one of the New Age movements is an American who spends most of his time in Kathmandu, Nepal. He calls himself Maitreya the Buddha and has a large entourage. His appearance is related to the myth that is ostensibly mentioned in the "Guru Letters" discussed above. According to that myth, Maitreya was expected to be born in the 1940's or 1950's in the state of Maryland. The latter would eventually become an American branch of Shambhala. However, this auspicious event did not receive due attention because of the

UFO landing in New Mexico. The "Maryland Maitreya" is preaching now near the great stupa of Boudhanath.

As time passed filling in the white spots on the world maps, a number of those believing in the physical Shambhala decreased considerably. Tibetan lamas require more scientific proofs of Shambhala's existence observing how the young generation of Tibetans loses its faith. Even the fourteenth Dalai Lama gives different opinions on Shambhala's existence. Sometimes he maintains that it does exist physically on our planet, while at other times he relates it to other cosmic dimensions. Once he joked that "if you go north in a straight line from India, you'll pass over the North Pole and eventually come down in America, so perhaps America is Shambhala" (quot. in Bernbaum, 37). According to E. Bernbaum, some lamas do accept the possibility of America being Shambhala, as it has "some of the material characteristics of an earthly paradise" (Bernbaum, 37). Some Tibetan emigrants perceive America as the "realm of gods". With almost a semi-centennial influx of Tibetan Buddhism to the West, the original Tibetan legend of Shambhala, not just Hilton's Shangri-la, became widely-known. Due to Chinese occupation and developing tourism, Tibet ceased to be a mystery and is no longer looked upon as Shambhala itself. For many westerners Shambhala had migrated together with Tibetan refugees.

BE-YULS. SHAMBHALA ON EARTH.

For some westerners of today the legendary kingdom has assumed very corporeal forms as concrete geographical locations. The notion of *Be-yuls* (*sbayul*), or hidden valleys, has been very popular for the last two decades. We have already mentioned that the issue of Buddhist pilgrimage sites, as part of the sacred geography, has been thoroughly examined by many western scholars and a great number of articles appeared on the subject that has never been touched before. Numerous *Lam-yig*, or Tibetan pilgrimage guides, have been translated into European languages and some of the *Be-yuls* have been discovered and visited by many. *Be-yuls* are believed to have been established and concealed by Padmasambhava during his travels in the Himalayas. They were supposed to contain *termas* (*gter-ma*)[88], or hidden treasures, that were to be revealed in due time by right tertons (*gter-ston*), or treasure discoverers. A number of *Be-yuls* are said to be located in Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim. The most famous of "opened"[89] *Be-yuls* are Khembalung (*mkanpa lung*)[90] of Nepal and Pemako (*PadmabKod*) (Tib. Lotus Splendour) of South-Eastern

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[88]. ***Bardo Thodol*** (*Bardo mthong drol*) translated as the ***Tibetan Book of the Dead*** is one of those *termas*, as well as the ***Guide to Khembalung***.

[89]. After *terton* opens a "hidden valley" it becomes a place of pilgrimage for the believers.

[90]. Also Khambalung, spelled in Tibetan "*Khenpa lung*". According to the Tibetan translator of the guidebook to be-yul Khembalung, "'*khenpa*' might refer to a type of grass (which may be used in making incense) found in the hidden valley"" (Reinhard, J. Khembalung: The Hidden Valley, "Kailash", vol. VI, 1978, pp.5-13).

Tibet that became especially venerated and visited by Nyingma-pa *tertons* from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries. According to Tibetan folk legends, the hidden valleys are protected by the deities assigned by Padmasambhava. Thus, they are impossible to penetrate for those who do not deserve that karmically. Protective forces might manifest themselves in the forms of snowstorms, mists, snow leopards, etc. Buddhist practitioners value these places as extremely beneficial for the practice. The ***Guide to Khembalung*** says: "It is much better to meditate one year in this place than a thousand years elsewhere, better to do one month's retreat here than a year's retreat outside" (quot. in Bernbaum, 64). According to Padmasambhava's prophesies, *Be-yuls* would turn into refuges in times of trouble[91]. The ***Guide to Khembalung*** informs us that "at the time when the happiness of beings is nearly finished and Tibet is about to be destroyed by foreign soldiers, then it is better to escape to a hidden place which is located on border of southern Tibet" (trans. Chopgyel Namgyal, "Kailash", vol. VI, 1978, p.16). This prophecy, as we can see now, has been somewhat proved by reality. Believers consider *Be-yuls* to be wish granted and blessing for all lucky visitors. All kinds of obstacles are supposed to be removed by the mere sight of these lands. During his journey to *Be-yul* Khembalung, J.Reinhard was told that people lived "underground in the cave, but cannot be

[91]. According to E. Bernbaum, Tibetans did flee "to the safety of remote mountain valleys" (66). They were often persuaded by false *tertons* who promised to guide them to the hidden valleys. E. Bernbaum asserts, that these people might have settled some Himalayas areas on the border with Tibet, although they "generally failed to find the particular sanctuaries they were seeking" (71).

seen" ("Kailash", vol. VI, 1978, p.11). Placed there by Padmasambhava, they would only appear in hard times. These subterranean inhabitants are reminiscent of Agharti and Kitezh legends that we discussed earlier. The experience of *Be-yuls* of a common man and that of an accomplished yogi, is different. Whereas the first might see just a heavenly beautiful valley, the latter can meet its inhabitants who remain invisible for a closed "wisdom eye". A yogi might also find books instructing him on different stages on the path to enlightenment. Thus, there are different levels of *Be-yuls*, i.e. outer, inner and secret. The latter is supposed to be the full realisation of a *be-yul* inside one's heart, the "hidden valley of suchness" as one Tibetan lama called it. Describing his impression of Khembalung, E. Bernbaum writes:

> I had touched a hidden source within myself. I had been trying to determine whether this valley was the Khembalung of the guidebook, but now that no longer mattered. I knew that this, whatever it was, was the hidden valley I had been seeking (Bernbaum, 61).

Although Shambhala and *Be-yuls* have different traditional roots, they apparently share a number of significant characteristics. Shambhala as well as hidden valleys, is a container of all kinds of material and spiritual treasures. Like *Be-yuls*, Shambhala is also associated with the future barbarian threat, and consequent redemption from the evil forces. The guidebooks to both Shambhala and *Be-yuls* have many common features too. The only difference between them is that Shambhala guidebooks give instructions for only one seeker, whereas Be-yuls' guidebooks can be followed by large groups of people. As in case with Shambhala, *Be-yuls* present the lands of wordly pleasures and prosperity for common people, while lamas perceive them as

ideal places for meditation and attainment of enlightenment. As a matter of fact, many lamas consider Shambhala to be the greatest "hidden valley".

INNER SHAMBHALA.

So far we have been trying to look only at the external aspect of the Shambhala myth. However, its inner symbolism seems to be the most significant aspect from the Buddhist point of view. Whether or not Shambhala exists as a geographical location, the myth has an extreme power of its own, and we had enough proofs for that throughout history. The longevity and actuality of the legend partially lies in its symbolism. Like the Outer and Inner parts of Kālacakra Shambhala has its outer and secret, or innermost, meanings. Keeping in mind that Kālacakra, as any other tantric text, is abundantly encoded, we may presume that the whole legend of Shambhala being a part of Kālacakra, represents some hidden outline or instruction for a tantric practitioner. On a certain stage of spiritual practice external and internal realities merge. Entering the maṇḍala of a particular deity and then visualising this mandala inside one's body and mind is exemplary for tantric sadhana. Many geographical places, first of all pilgrimage sites, are associated with mandalas of various deities, and specific spots of those places - with the deity's cakras. For example, Nyingma-pa adepts perceive *Be-yul* Pemako as the body of Vajravarāhī deity. For them entering and traversing the valley means a highly esoteric process of passing through Vajravarāhī's chakras that correspond to those of a yogi. This presents in short a currently popular concept of "sacred geography". E. Bernbaum suggests that we should read "hidden valleys as maps of the mind that show us the various levels concealed within it" (Bernbaum, 139). This well refers to Shambhala. E. Bernbaum devotes five chapters to the question of Shambhala symbolism giving the most comprehensive analysis of it. Since this

topic is too extensive for a limited thesis volume, we shall try to summarise it.

The whole landscape of Shambhala, with its blossom-petal shape and division into principalities with the King's Palace in the centre, has mandala structure. We usually find the principal deity and his or her palace in the midst of mandala symbolising the innermost mind, or true nature of reality, the goal of a yogi. A maṇḍala can represent both the mind and the body. In Hinduism the head cakra is depicted as an opening lotus. In Kālacakra Tantra the eight-petaled lotus symbolises the heart centre, that is called the Dharma Chakra (Skt. The Wheel of Truth). Thus the lotus-shape of Shambhala corresponds to the heart chakra of a yogi's body where he is supposed to realise the inner kingdom. The Shambhala King, as the embodiment of the innermost mind, rules over different levels of consciousness represented by his subjects. Unlike barbarians that roam untamed outside the kingdom, all the Shambhala inhabitants are loyal to their enlightened ruler.

Performing mandala practice, a yogi is visualising the world surrounding him as mandala. The maṇḍala structure of Shambhala also presumes that the whole world can be seen as Shambhala. Identifying ourselves with the ruler in the centre, and people surrounding us, with the Shambhala dwellers and the eight lotus petals with the eight directions around, we can eventually purify our experience of the world. Thus we are minimising and eventually eliminating the abyss between Shambhala and everyday life.

Most lamas highly estimate the teachings of Shambhala as the purest form of Kālacakra. According to Sakya Trizin, "all other forms, such as the written ones found in texts, have their real source deep in the mind, in someone's experience of the inner Shambhala" (quot. in Bernbaum, 150).

One of the King's possessions, the wish-fulfilling gem, is the famous *Cintāmaṇi*, also known as *Norbu Rinpoche*, the desirous goal of so many seekers. The Sanskrit words "*cintā*" and "*maṇi*" denoting "mind" and "jewel", unerringly point to the diamond indestructibility and wish-fulfilling nature of the enlightened mind. Tremendous wealth of the King and his subjects stand as well for the unthinkable riches of the mind that once discovered, quench all desires.

Everybody who reaches the state of the King of Shambhala, becomes a master of oneself. According to Chopgyet Trichen Rinpoche, "if you can use your body properly, then the body becomes Shambhala, the ninety-six principalities concur in all their actions, and you conquer the kingdom itself" (quot. in Bernbaum, 155). Another lama, Jamspal, says that Shambhala can be experienced here and now for "there is nowhere where Rigden Dragpo (*Rigs ldan dragpo*) (Rudra Cakrin) is not, and where he is is Shambhala" (quot. in Bernbaum, 155).

The guidebooks to Shambhala speak about the enormous distance separating us from Shambhala, severe hardships on the way and superhuman powers that one should possess in order to reach the goal. We may, though, occasionally, catch a glimpse of the innermost mind as the herders and hunters of Tibetan stories who incidently stumbled across hidden valleys. Driven by material yearnings, they were not able to stay and enjoy peace and happiness that was offered to them. Similarly, if we are not persistent enough in our search for the source of the glimpses, they will come and go leaving us confined in delusion. The guidebooks can also represent the instructions for carrying out the metaphysical journey to the concealed depth of our mind. In this sense the guidebooks to Shambhala can be compared to ***Bardo Thodol***. As in the journey that awaits

us after death, on the way to Shambhala we are supposed to overcome our hidden fears, desires and habits appearing in the forms of various deities and demons, by realising their emptiness.

The time of death can be crucial. One text on Shambhala suggests that "even the lay attendants who do not practice meditation, can, at the time of death, transfer their consciousness to the Pure Lands and avoid rebirth in the lower realms" (quot. in Bernbaum, 153). Though the rumours about the exceptional heroes who have actually travelled to Shambhala are still very popular among Tibetans, the contemporary view of some lamas is that in our degenerate age Shambhala can no longer be reached physically but only through death and rebirth. There are also a number of accounts on visiting Shambhala in dreams. Such dreams have usually a very lucid character enabling a dreamer to write them down upon awakening. Another form of travelling to Shambhala, and probably the most suitable one, is through meditation. After all, it is only with the help of a steady meditation practice that we may transfer our everyday consciousness into the pure primordial wisdom of Shambhala King.

A relatively new tradition that was born inside the Nyingma-pa school adopted the myth of Shambhala in a rather revolutionary way. The root text of that tradition, two volumed *Kālacakra commentary*, was revealed in the end of the nineteenth century by Nyingma terton Mipham Rinpoche. This tradition accredited the legendary figure of Gesar with the grand mission of becoming the twenty-fifth Shambhala King. Nyingma-pas consider Gesar to be the reincarnation of Padmasmbhava. As the protector and propagator of Buddhist Faith he is supposed to be reborn as Rudra Cakrin to dispel

the dark barbarian forces. Moreover, the name of Gesar is connected to the pre-Buddhist teachings of *Dzog-chen* (*Rzogs chen*) preserved inside the Nyingma school. In the Nyingma legend entitled The Lord of Death, Ling Gesar and Great Perfection by an unknown author from Kham, Gesar is presented as a unique archetype combining spirituality of an enlightened lama and the secular role of a warrior king. This notion of ideal kingship refers to the ancient conception of *cakravartin* that can be traced "not only to the earliest Vedic, but also to the pre-Vedic, pre-Aryan traditions of India" (quot. in Sponberg, Hardacre, 9). The name Rudra Cakrin also suggests the direct connection to *cakravartin* ideal.

Being associated with the primordial awareness itself (Tib. *rig-pa*), Gesar is believed to conquer the barbarians without any confrontation or killing involved. To comment on that we have to disclose the esoteric symbolism underlining Shambhala prophecy. If we follow the pattern presented above and view the final battle of Shambhala as the conflict occuring in our mind, we may recognise the clash of various senses as Shambhala enemies in disguise. These senses-barbarians are projections of our ever-restless ego that faces the deeper layers of mind in the form of Shambhala. Catching the glimpses of these unexplored layers, the expanding ego is trying to subdue even them, consequently destroying itself. According to the prophecy, all those who would die in the final combat would be reborn in the Pure Land of Shambhala. Thus by attacking Shambhala and by attempting to destroy Buddhism, ignorant barbarians facilitated its spread and the golden age establishment. The mighty barbarian army is defeated by Rudra Cakrin's realisation of its illusory nature, not by means of another

more powerful ego. This conflict is an inevitable stage on the practitioner's path.

According to the modern Nyingma tradition, the hero of Tibetan and Mongolian folklore, Gesar, is supposed to represent a model of an enlightened king-warrior who wisely rules his country just as the enlightened mind subgugates the struggling senses. The Nyingma-pas' view of Shambhala[92] and especially its final battle differs from that of the Gelug-pas. The first emphasizes the esoteric aspect of the legend and prophecy of Shambhala. Shambhala is therefore perceived as primarily the inner kingdom of one's heart, and its future battle as the taming the ignorance of one's ego by means of pure and direct awareness. This implies the *drala (dgra lha)*[93] principle, or transformation and transcendence of negativity embodied by Gesar. For a spiritual warrior, the physical existence of Shambhala is not a primary concern. He aims at establishing an indestructible kingdom in his heart, and through it, in the world.

The Gelug school, on the contrary, tends to insist on

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[92].Unfortunately the texts that can broaden our knowledge of Nyingma-pas' perception of Shambhala, such as The Great Commentary on Kalacakra by Mipham Rinpoche and a poem Gesar Goes to Hell by an unknown author from Kham province, are not translated yet from the Tibetan language. We are aware, however, that this trend of Nyingma-pa school continues to develop.

[93]. "*Dra*" means enemy and "*la*" is beyond. *Drala* literally means "beyond the enemy". According to Chogyam Trungpa, "*drala* is the unconditioned wisdom and power of the world that are beyond any dualism" (Trungpa, 103). This principle became the heart of "Shambhala Training", a program launched by Chogyam Trungpa in the United States in 1977. Its main goal was "to use the image of the Shambhala kingdom to represent the ideal of secular enlightenment, that is the possibility of uplifting our personal existence and that of others without the help of any religious outlook" (Trungpa, 27).

physical existence of Shambhala interpreting its future battle as a real historical event that would take place in 2327. As we have already discussed, many Gelug lamas, including the Third Panchen lama, associated themselves with the future participants of the great combat. The famous Tibetan prayer composed by the Third Panchen Lama, is saturated with the militant spirit. The following lines of it resemble the ancient Tamil poems of war:

> Your million warriors shall be of many colours-
> Four hundred thousand elephants drunk with rage,
> Golden chariots with weapons and young warriors,
> All will enter the wrathful war. (quot. in Bernbaum, 23).

All the barbarians, i.e. representatives of all non-Buddhist religions are to be exterminated. Though, as we mentioned before, the Kālacakra texts classify Christianity, Judaism and Manicheism as barbarian teachings, Islam is seen as the main threat to the spirituality exemplified by Buddhism. At the time when Kālacakra reached India, Islam had already annihilated Buddhism in Central Asia and was about to do the same in India. As with most ancient texts, it is hard to determine which parts of Kālacakra are genuine and which had been added and superimposed in the process of time. The authors, commentators, or possibly copyists of the Kalacakra texts, could have adopted the Muslim concept of *Jihad* into the Buddhist context. This still puzzles those who are inclined to behold Buddhism as the most peaceful religion in the world. Those who would live in the year of 2327 would probably have a chance to learn whether it is true or not, and to know who after all holds the right view, Gelug or Nyingma. However, such key Buddhist terms as "*arahat*" and "*dra-compa*" (*dgra-bcompa*) (Tib. Killer of the enemies,"bodhisattva") both derive from the verb "to kill".

The interpretation is up to us.

SUMMARY

In the process of the present study we have seen how different ages added new interpretations to the Shambhala legend. For some people it was a hope-giving and attainable reality. For others, it became a symbol of the lost paradise that stayed flawlessly preserved in the inaccessible Tibetan mountains. It was used as a slogan and weapon in a desperate fight for establishing Shambhala on earth, to merge eternal and temporal, sacred and profane. This attempt reached its total absurdity in Nazi and Communist doctrines. The West has manifested a conspicuous tendency to materialise even the subtlest intangible concepts, reducing them to political or social structures. It took the myth too verbatim and failed to adopt its innermost essence. The long-term unwillingness of Tibet to unveil itself to the foreigners has turned out quite sound. Enthusiasm aroused by Shambhala was followed by rather naive attempts of Roerich to attract the attention of the Soviet governors to the universal message of Shambhala and Hitler's bloody crusades under the signs of swastika and Shambhala. The ancient myth became the moving force of numerous political intrigues. The West was obviously not ready to embrace the profound message of the legend. The transformation of the Shambhala myth became an excellent example of enigmatic relationship between the myth and human mind. If presented in a scheme, this transformation could be as follows: reality (in the form of a once existent historical kingdom) multiplied by hope, created a myth which in its turn created its own reality. The latter can be divided into an external aspect that is created and can be

characterised by negativity and destruction, and an internal one that is to be revealed and is always positive and creative. When a myth (we may call it here an "orthomyth") oversteps its authentic cultural framework, it may turn into pseudomythology that instead of liberating human imagination, enslaves it. Times of political and economical upheavals are most favourable for pseudomythology that penetrates politics and science and becomes an instrument of power that eventually victimises its creators. Will for power that, according to Nietzsche, is the motive force of all the past and present "supermen", needs to find itself a comfortable mask of a myth. It has to produce pseudomythology to justify its immeasurable cravings. According to V. Gusman,

> While the real historical myth is a legitimate form of the ritualistic-esthetical vision of the cosmos, i.e. a special system of the world perception based on tradition, pseudo-mythology always derives from the subjective, ("profane" as opposed to "sacred") source and is not linked to the tradition passed from generation to generation ([translation is mine], Gusman, 190).

As we have seen, the signs of this Shambhala pseudomythology despite its striking nonsense, are still very distinct in the world. History has too many examples of how the most ludicrous irrational ideas manipulate masses.

The question of whether the legend of Shambhala originally appeared as an inspiration for an actual battle against historical enemies of Buddhism or Hinduism, or as initially intended at conquering internal enemies of perfection, remains open. If Shambhala existed once as a Buddhist Central Asian state, it could be an easy target for Islamic threat. Efforts to preserve Buddhism in alien

surroundings and awareness of its imminent destruction could result in rather aggressive Kālacakra predictions.

On the other hand, it seems quite probable that Shambhala could exist as a community of sages concealed from the world and secluded in the impassible mountains of presumably the Kun-Luns or Pamirs. Having been discovered by lucky few, it could have inspired numerous legends. Dwellings of wise men of all times, whether monasteries, forests or caves, were always out of reach of the samsaric world the liberation from which they were seeking. In fact such remote monasteries may exist even today without any external interference. E. Bernbaum refers to Sir Aurel Stein, a British explorer who "worked his way through nearly impassible gorges of the Pamirs to the valley of Roshan, where he found a people who had had virtually no contact with the outside world for centuries" (Bernbaum, 46). In his book Meetings with Remarkable Men G. Gurdjiev tells about spiritual fraternities located in the remote and hard to reach areas of Turkestan[94]. If we assume that Shambhala belonged to that type of spiritual settlement, the idea of any external threat appears to be inappropriate.

As was earlier mentioned, the idea of battle does not appear in other Shambhala related myths. It could be a later addition, or the very concept of struggle could be perceived as a metaphor for the spiritual accomplishments as, for example, suggested by Nyingma-pas. After all, it is our dual consciousness that sees everything in terms of opposites

[94]. Describing his journey to one of these secluded fraternities, G. Gurdjiev says that during the trip that took about one month he and his companion were supposed to wear *bashlyks* or special hoods that prevent them from seeing and remembering the way (see G.Gudjiev, Meetings with Remarkable Men, p. 149-150).

fighting each other.

As all the dire attempts to bring about the millenium here and now failed, many western truth-seekers turned to inner dimensions. We may suspect that the tendency of interpreting the legend of Shambhala in more metaphysical terms, rather than taking it at face value, arose in the second half of this century as a reaction to the horrors of totalitarianism and fascism. Nevertheless, such an interpretation seems to be more relevant, at least in the modern context. Shambhala as a symbol, opens up infinite perspectives for personal growth. We saw how all the attempts to search for external embodied Shambhala and to reduce it to some earthly paradise brought about absurdity, or extremely egotistic and dangerous ideas. Since, as the fates decree, the myth is no longer sealed in its Tibetan cache, it is probably safer for the planet to hold to its pure symbolic interpretation. This by no means cancels the possibility of its actual existence. An old argument saying that not seeing something does not deny its existence is still applicable to the legendary places like Shambhala. Few believed in the historical existence of Troy until Schliemann's discovery.

It is difficult to decide which version of Shambhala interpretation is more conceivable and accurate. Future study of the subject may find the solution. However, this argument may not present primary importance comparing to other issues raised by the legend. One of these issues is the symbolism of Shambhala that explicitly surpasses the original Buddhist context of the legend opening new dimensions of it. It conceals a universal message for all disregarding religious creeds or social backgrounds. According to J.M. Kitagawa, "for the most part, the historian of religions is interested in the *mythos*...because he or she is looking for the 'horison

of religious meaning' derived from myths, symbols and cults" and "it is the task of the historian of religions to look for universal meaning in various religious traditions" (A.Sponberg, H. Hardacre, 20).

If religion[95] is to be understood as *"re-ligare"*, i.e. "re-connection" or "re-joining", the legend of Shambhala is in itself a universal religious symbol. An embodiment of the immanent human aspirations, it becomes a bridge between earth and heaven, man and god. The core of the legend is the belief in the physical existence of the attainable pure land on earth. Due to that belief the Shambhala legend has acquired such an incredible longevity and variety of interpretations. Though the legend became known to us in the Buddhist context, it undoubtedly transcends any particular religious framework. Some of its distinguishing characteristics that we discussed in the first chapter are not just Buddhist but all-pervasive. To summarise these characteristics, we may say that the Shambhala legend 1) gives hope for both present and possible future existence, 2) encourages merit-making as an assurance for future salvation and 3) elevates the soul over mundane activities.

The symbolism of the hidden Shambhala kingdom can be also seen in different ways. It can present a reservoir of knowledge and wisdom in times of decline, guidance of spiritual evolution and evidence of our present miserable condition.

Just the way it signifies the inner kingdom of the mind, it may refer to the world around us which is still to be discovered and experienced as it really is and not as we

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[95]. The latin word "religion" implies the establishing of a lost bond, whereas its Sanskrit equivalent "*dharma*" means an already existing unchanging order.

project it with our confusion and egotism. The very existence of the Shambhala legend being a promise of a potential progress, points to the conditioned reality we live in, and to our obscure state of mind. We may turn our lives into the journey to Shambhala of our mind. Some authors (Thomas, Trungpa) mention a mirror as a tool helping to see Shambhala. A mirror is placed in the inner sanctum of a Shinto shrine so that believers can finally realise themselves as inseparable from the divine. A Medieval Persian Sufi poem <u>The Conference of Birds</u> tells us about the journey that the birds took to find their legendary king Simurgh. After many years of hardships they finally realised that Simurgh meaning "thirty birds" is nothing but themselves and that the journey was necessary to vanquish their dualistic vision. The journey brings the realisation of the oneness of the path and the goal. Since the zenith of the materialistic aspirations of mankind has been seemingly achieved, at least in some countries, the utmost effort should be obviously directed inwards in search of the hidden treasures of the inner dimensions. When, before entering his parinirvana, the Buddha told his disciples "to rely only on themselves", did not he point out the direction?

We are free to interpret the legend of Shambhala the way we like and there can be as many shambhalas as individuals in this world. It appeals to some inherent, yet unknown, part of ourselves that once discovered, can bring more sacred vision of the world and make the legend a skilful means of personal and eventually global evolution.

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